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Lands That Were Golden

I. *New York and the Hinterland*

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IN THE loud nineteen-twenties, when a Younger Generation could still hope to save the nation by disillusioning it, hardly anything American seemed destined to escape the scorn of the debunkers. A backward look, however, reveals a principle of selection that in former days was less apparent. Upon the Eastern metropolitan regions to which the Young Intellectuals were fleeing, the blows fell lightly and good-humouredly when they fell at all; this region, with Europe beyond, was their refuge. Regions of the South Atlantic coast, though in the past they had greatly offended, were treated with some indulgence. Cities like Baltimore and Charleston, even parts of Virginia and North Carolina, were spared rough treatment; they were conceded a lingering modicum of civilization. But upon a region that came to be known as the hinterland, lying vaguely somewhere to the west and south, the blows fell ceaselessly, without quarter to persons, institutions, or localities.

Innocent of history as they were, the young scorners — many of whom were actually on the ragged edge of middle age — could hardly have been expected to know that their lament was so familiar in American annals as to be antique. The hinterland about which they complained was the Old West that long before this had annoyed the dynasties of Virginia and Massachusetts: it began then, as in the nineteen-twenties, with Kentucky and Tennessee, and extended through the enormous regions south and west to Texas and the Great Plains; and it covered the country north of the Ohio River and westward, athwart the upper reaches of the Mississippi Valley. The complaint of the nineteen-twenties was almost identical, in some respects, with that of an earlier day: the Eastern metropolitans were distressed by the uncouth manners of the Western folk — in this case, their impudent disrespect for the patterns of modernity that many of the critics were just in the act of putting on for the first time.

The legend, thus renewed under peculiar circumstances, of the barbarism of the South, especially in its southwestern parts, and of the vulgarity and dullness of the Middle West, for a good many years has governed the approach of the metropolitan East to the phenomena of life in the so-called hinterland. Whether the approach be literary, or sociological, or merely journalistic, the assumptions have been always the same, and the ensuing generalizations have been uniformly tagged with shocked protest and pious exhortation. The South — so the tale runs — is a region full of little else but lynchings, shootings, chain gangs, poor whites, Ku Kluxers, hookworm, pellagra, and a few decayed patricians whose chief intent is to deprive the uncontaminated, spiritual-singing Negro of his life and liberty. But what is more shocking, it is inhabited by believers in God, who pass anti-evolution laws; and more shocking still, it is in thought and deed studiously backward and anti-progressive. The Middle West – the tale says – is a land of morons, boobs, and shoulder-smacking Babbitts, in which, despite a plethora of schools and modern conveniences, an artist soul feels cramped and misunderstood; or a land of lonely farms where men and women drudge away their sterile lives; or of repressions and shams, where tender little Clyde Griffiths's who start out as bell-boys must perforce end up as murderers. Over such pictures the East stormed, or shed crocodile tears, in the clever nineteen-twenties.

The familiar condescension of the East for the West, of course, may be viewed in part as the condescension of the capital toward the provinces, or of the home country toward the colonial dependencies. The American of the Atlantic coast has been prone to cherish precisely the attitude of superiority toward the outlying regions that the Englishman has assumed toward the United States. The old New Yorker or New Englander, when not suppressing his real sentiments in order to achieve a commercial or political bargain, has often spoken of the manners of Westerners in the language of Mrs. Trollope. But in the nineteen-twenties this condescension became for the first time the source of an aesthetic theory which professed to explain the sterility of American art, and of a literary fashion which produced a stream of "realistic" novels that repeated over and over Mr. Van Wyck Brooks's strictures on Puritanism and its fatal extension on the American continent, or Mr. Mencken's volatile dissatisfaction with most things indigenously American.

Although the aesthetic theory has lingered on rather persistently, now and then fitfully reappearing in books like Ludwig Lewisohn's *Expression in America* (recently criticized in these pages by Dorothea Brande), the literary fashion now seems to be falling on evil days. That the vitality has gone out of it may be safely hazarded from the fact that the Pulitzer judges, who are generally careful to stay at least five or six years behind the times, have recently given an award to Mr. T. S. Stribling's *The Store*, as the novel of the year that best depicts American life. Since Mr. Stribling's theme is the old theme of the backwardness of his native Southern region, we are fairly well justified, under the circumstances, in labelling that theme as dead. Furthermore, Mr. Mencken has left *The American Mercury*. Mr. Bernard De Voto has demolished Mr. Brooks's theory of Puritanism in frontier life. And Mr. Malcolm Cowley has sung a requiem over the home-coming remains of the Little Magazines and the expatriates of yesterday. Now only a Pulitzer award for Mr. Erskine Caldwell is needed to fill up the charnel house with bones of the long since dead, and to close one of the strangest, but one of the most ominous, chapters in American literary history.

II

If there had not been a renaissance among historians, which quietly began at almost the same time as the famous literary renaissance, but produced its effects later, the literary fashion would doubtless have lasted longer and begotten more monstrous creations. It is strange – or perhaps it is not strange at all – that the historical movement has received little attention in comparison with the literary movement which it paralleled. The circumstances of its origin have not been recorded; its course has nowhere been charted. The genuine history of American life so quickly succeeded the debunking efforts of the rebel aesthetes that it must have been under way, as spade-work and exploration, for a long time. Perhaps the rousing argument over American culture helped to give occasion for its appearance in a definitive and apprehensible form.

Now, at any rate, we can see that the years when Mr. Mencken and Mr. Lewis were blasting the hinterland with their negative excoriations were years of studied accumulation, in the hinterland itself, of the particular items of an American culture, or cultures, that the critics argued did not exist. Doubtless it was the slow drive of the historical movement that at last, somewhat to the surprise of Eastern publishers, swung popular taste away from realistic fiction to biography and history and ultimately forced even the intellectuals to reconsider the historical and cultural data which they had too blithely dismissed. In these years Claude Bowers's political studies of Jefferson and Hamilton or of the Reconstruction period swept the country; and a little later came James Truslow Adams with *The Epic of America* and *The Adams Family*. Although some of these books and others like them were in a popular or semi-popular vein, they could not be passed by as insignificant, for they rested upon the solid foundation that the professional historians, unknown to the general public, had long been busy in erecting. From the semi-popular books it was an easy step to the works of professional historians that were slowly but surely tipping the balance of American consideration. Of these works, many of which were of revolutionary importance, I shall name but two examples, for the general principles that they supply: the works of Frederick J. Turner, beginning with his study of the frontier and ending with his *Significance of the Sections in United States History*; and on the literary side, Vernon Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*.

A great many of the more notable histories were written by Southerners and Westerners – men from the regions that had been most severely attacked. Parrington was a man of the Far Northwest; Turner came from the Middle West; Ulrich B. Phillips, author of *Life and Labor in the Old South*, was a native of Georgia who taught history at the University of Chicago; Beveridge and Bowers were Middle Westerners. Their account of the American past, and, by implication, their interpretation of the present, stood out in bold contradiction to *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* or *The Education of Henry Adams*, which had worked like a sweet poison in the veins of Eastern aesthetes. The new historical movement to a large extent denied the facts upon which the earlier critical statement had been based. But what was more important, the historians found the life of the hinterland rich, abundant, diverse, where the critics reported only barrenness. That it had serious blemishes, all admitted. But the Eastern explanations were not always the right explanations, and defects were not to be removed by the short-cuts that were being prescribed. Eastern criticism implied that there was a sovereign national culture, still originating in the East and destined to rule the hinterland as its subject territory. But in the works of Turner and Parrington, the fundamental thesis read otherwise. The lands that were golden and had caught the westward spill of an Eastern population were no longer tributary. Now they were divided into the self-conscious and mature sections or regions into which the tendencies of their past and their physiographic environment had shaped them. There was no sovereign national culture for them to bow to, or none, at least, that was the private function of a region all too recognizable as an Eastern region.

In the historical movement, therefore, were not only the facts for a rebuttal of metropolitan criticism, but the foundations of a self-assertive counter-attack. The new regional movement at once built upon those foundations, adding to the work of the historians the researches of folklorists who were probing into the songs, legends, and crafts that constituted the living and growing substratum of a native American culture.

The upshot was a counter-stroke of a kind new in American history. The contention between East and West was not new. But the old quarrels had dealt with matters economic and political. In matters cultural the hinterland had in general previously aspired to possess the terms of civilization approved in the East from which it had lately come. Now the old economic and political feud was to reach into a new field. There was to be a battle of cultures as well. The quarrel was as to how people ought to live.

III

It is neither possible nor sensible to wave aside the metropolitan attack as completely futile or completely mistaken. It was often brilliant and sometimes pointed. But when one begins to ask what way of life the critics wanted the hinterland to adopt, one must pass by whatever undeniable merit the criticism may have had for its no less undeniable, and now startling, weaknesses. The works of the critics were anathemas, not credos. It is not easy to disentangle from their utterances any positive scheme to which they would give allegiance. Occasionally Mr. Mencken talked about "decency" or "intelligence". The advocates of "creative criticism" wanted personal taste to overrule aesthetic or historical standards. Mr. Van Wyck Brooks and others were anti-Puritan; but many of this school were so ill-informed historically that they thought Puritanism and Methodism the same thing. Nearly all the critics were anti-religious; nearly all preferred an aesthetic judgement to a moral one. All were anti-Victorian, and talked a lot about Freud and sex. If they had any strong positive belief, it was in the power of science to determine the conditions of human life, and in the power of art to soothe and make genteel. Politics, economics, world affairs were at the moment beneath their notice. They did not believe very firmly in anything; but they disbelieved stoutly in a very great deal. They were sceptics, or cynics. They had cast off loyalties to place or kin, or they had had none to begin with. Though their ranks numbered a few men of native Eastern stock, the greater number were of two sorts: migrants to New York from some region of the hinterland, from which they had escaped in search of a career; or scions of the newer immigrant stock – the expatriated nationals from a medley of European countries – who had no intimate share in the historic experience of any American place. Their temper was cosmopolitan in a way; but the intensity of their dissociation gives point to Chesterton's remark that New York, though a cosmopolitan city, is not a city of cosmopolitans. The essence of the doctrine that they sought to convey to outlying America may be stated in one word: Decadence.

But at the moment when the Younger Generation were making a choice for Decadence, the great regions of the South and West had put their stormy youth behind them and were ready for the counsels of vigorous maturity. In contrast with the states of the Northeast and the Middle Atlantic, in which the old American stock had become a minority, the population of the South was almost wholly native, and, if the Negroes are excepted, it was still basically of the old colonial breed. In the Middle West the same stock was still a dominant majority, which was far more successful than the East had been in attracting and assimilating its later immigrants – largely Scandinavians and Germans who were racially akin to the older stock. These regions – physiographically linked as one by conditions of life in the Mississippi Valley, but sectionally split into a north and south by deep historic causes – were the Old West of American story, the seat, for more than a hundred years, of the "selfconscious American democracy" of Turner's phrase. There were many reasons why the regions should examine their life in order to understand its strength or correct its abuses. But within themselves there was no reason whatever for turning to Decadence.

It is one of the tragedies of American history that the intellectual leadership of the United States at this time should have been even temporarily in the hands of a group of artists and thinkers who were more impressed by the economic and artistic defeatism of post-War Europe than by the living and diverse traditions of their native America. But there they were, in New York. From old habit the regions looked naturally to the East, as one source from which to derive cultural guides and examples. Besides, New York had accumulated not only the prestige but all the material appointments of an intellectual capital. New York had a vigorous press, able critical journals, thriving publishing houses. It had wealth and power with which to influence or control opinion so far as opinion could be reached through urban agencies.

What the regions of the hinterland did not see at the time was that New York was beginning a spiritual secession from the America of which it had been an organic part. In its population it was already a foreign city, with an amazing preponderance of heterogeneous new racial stocks. Yet the mixed population mattered far less than the ideas which its peculiar sensitivity to the European post-War situation predisposed its intellectual leaders to transmit. For one reason or another these ideas had little to do with the fundamental European tradition which in times past had been valuable to American thought. What came across the Atlantic in the nineteen-twenties was the rationalized despair of European groups that felt vitality and power slipping from them or the rationalized aspiration of other groups, some of which were not essentially European at all, that were clutching after power. They were ideas born of political and economic situations that did not apply in the United States.

Thus it happened that New York transmitted, to the one people on earth who were freest of class-consciousness, the Marxian theory of the war of the classes. To the least neurotic and most energetic of races it offered the Freudian doctrine of repressions and complexes. To a people the greater part of whom were schooled in Protestant religion and morality New York presented, with a knowing leer, under the guise of literary classics, the works of voluptuaries and perverts, the teeming pages of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, and all the choicest remains of the literary bordellos of the ancient and modern world. German Expressionism, French Dadaism, the erotic primitivism of D. H. Lawrence, the gigantic *fin de siècle* pedantries and experimentalisms of James Joyce, the infantilism of Gertrude Stein and various Parisian coteries – these furnished most of the catchwords for all the clever people.

While all this was happening, the New Poetry movement was captured by Amy Lowell and the émigrés and given so thoroughly cosmopolitan a turn that it lost all root in America. Its aesthetics, always a little cloudy, became so tenuous that the reaction, when it set in, leaned over backward in excessive zeal for the scholarly, the learned, the exact. Poets like

Frost, Robinson, or Lindsay, who wrote out of a frankly American experience, had to be looked at through a thick haze of French symbolist verse. Their traditionalism was as little understood as the more self-conscious and entirely different traditionalism of T. S. Eliot, which came a little later. Prohibition was iniquitous; the Versailles Treaty was iniquitous; politics, God, the Ohio Gang, the Old South, the New Middle West – all were iniquitous somehow or other, and were denounced in the tipsy medley that went on and on. It was the fashion, in fact, to be very pessimistic and a little drunk most of the time. While New York read *The Decline of the West*, Joseph Wood Krutch defined the modern temper as an artistic acceptance of coming doom, and quoted the "Hail, horrors!" speech of Milton's Rebel Angel in the accents of a toper who begins to recall snatches of poetry at 2 A. M.

To offer this farrago to the hinterland of America as representing what was worth thinking about in all fields of thought and worth using as the *exempla* of the good life, was like giving to a man in ordinary health the perfected hypodermic needle with which the complaisant quack furnishes the drug addict. To the sections rebuked as lacking in civilization the critics recommended, it would seem, the diseases of civilization rather than the true urbanity and high thinking that would be expected to emanate from a civilized metropolis. To the most powerful nation on the globe, unravaged by war and anything but disheartened by circumstance, the spokesmen of New York found nothing better to offer than a gospel of impotence and defeat.

IV

Out of the various results of this process, three stand out as important. First, the life of the outlying regions and the art which they were now ready to produce – for the first time abundantly, and consistently with their own traditions – were judged in New York in the light of the weak cosmopolitanism or decayed Europeanism in which the critical spokesmen were interested. This judgement, once made and reported, was disseminated in two directions. Since New York is the main channel of communication between America and Europe, it was the New York account of the estate of the hinterland that went abroad. And in telling foreign capitals what New York thought of the hinterland, New York gave it the meaning that Europe was only too eager to accept as correct. The black reputation of America in Europe, though brought about in part by political and economic causes, has clearly been motivated and sustained by damaging evidence furnished from New York. It was a strange disproportion that allowed a single city, in a far eastern corner of America, a practical monopoly in reporting the life of a continental area that it did not pretend to understand. It is painful to recall how often that report has been partial, how rarely it has been catholic. From one point of view, such reporting looks almost like a betrayal of the country from which New York draws its wealth, its power, its life. But more likely it is only a blind presumption, which a dweller in the hinterland can observe with incredulity and growing irritation.

But New York views, New York standards, New

York criticism of the nineteen-twenties also passed readily by domestic channels into the hinterland itself. Far from being illiterate, as the critics were charging, the regions of the hinterland now seem to have been almost too literate for their own good. As New York never failed to read British criticisms of America, so the hinterland did not fail to read the books of its Eastern castigators, and often made them best-sellers in the regions most fiercely castigated. The younger generation of the hinterland, pouring from the crowded high schools and colleges, almost pathetically eager to keep up with the swift pace of the times, were often enough persuaded to hail the literature of disillusionment as the flag of their emancipation. In part, we cannot doubt that the metropolitan onslaught made decided progress within the hinterland; it captured, it perverted, it inspired or deflated. But in part it also angered. As the historical movement gathered force, and as old political and economic issues again came to the front, regional anger was gradually fortified by deliberate cultural resistance of a kind less easily routed than Fundamentalism or Ku Kluxism. A still younger generation has arisen to succeed the younger generation that was half persuaded to deny itself. To this youngest generation Decadence makes little appeal, and the metropolitan promise of New York is sterile. This generation is ready, perhaps, to make the reply which the oldest generation, angered by metropolitan attacks, could frame only in antiquated terms. That reply is regionalism, a doctrine of self-determination which renews, in different terms, the old cleavage between the lands of the East and those of the South and West.

This yielding and this resistance will serve to explain some of the damaging confusions that the student of regionalism will find today in whatever regions he attempts to explore. To the onslaught of dissociated New York and to the mixed reaction of the hinterland are due the contradictory phenomena that flourish side by side. In any given region one is sure to find warring schools of thought, opposing groups of writers, clashing social tendencies. Among the writers there are always regionalists, conscious or unconscious, old or young, who are loyal, and metropolitans who repeat the critical strictures of a decade ago. In Georgia, for example, are John Donald Wade and Erskine Caldwell, and what the one loves the other hates; in Mississippi, Stark Young and William Faulkner; in Tennessee, T. S. Stribling and Allen Tate; in the Middle West, Willa Cather and Theodore Dreiser, Vachel Lindsay and Ben Hecht. The same confusion puts skyscrapers in cities whose chief resource is plenitude of land; Hollywood manners in mountain cabins; French eroticism in Puritan households; the urban wisecrack in the mouths of Sut Lovengood's grandchildren. But deeper than this conflict, which from day to day changes its term, is a constant element: the inertia of the regions, which is also their unselfconscious life, their differentiating vitality. This constant element, which may be veiled but can never be obliterated, is likely to prove the deciding element.

But, lastly, the consequences of the situation are no less important for New York and the East than for the hinterland. If New York is to be an intellectual capital, New York ought to consider realistically what kind of relation to the hinterland will make its position secure and its function good. Obviously, New York cannot endure the impoverishment within itself which would be the result of too severe a dissociation. But that is exactly the result which its past tendencies have seemed to invite. Habituated to a conception of itself as metropolitan arbiter of taste and ideas, New York has erred in thinking that it can impose as freely as it can judge. America is not, as New York thinks, so nearly uniform, or so closely approaching the metropolitan image as to accept without demur any image proposed from New York. It would be more in point to contemplate the other possibility – that eventually New York might no more be able to determine the life of regions around Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco than it can now determine Rome or Vienna.

New York has generally refused to contemplate such a possibility. This refusal, when combined with the aesthetic preferences and forms of life that it has been prone to cultivate, threatens to make New York almost as much a centre of repulsion as of attraction, and tends to deprive it of the continual refreshment from provincial sources that a capital might normally expect. Without too great temerity, one might find in this situation a partial explanation of the decay of its critical thought, or of the rapid transformation of many of its periodicals from "national" journals to sectional and propagandistic organs. Through a like consideration one can begin to understand books that are otherwise meaningless: the laboured attempts of Waldo Frank, Granville Hicks, Ludwig Lewisohn, V. F. Calverton to camouflage American traditions with their own peculiar obsessions about sex, Zionism, and the down-trodden proletariat. One can also understand why New York journalists and critics so often essay by sheer noise to howl down any dissidence within their own metropolitan neighbourhood, or the more ominous dissidence of Old New England, to which the turn of affairs in the nineteen-twenties was far from pleasing. But none of these attempts, understandable though they may be, will make New York a good capital, for they do not check the process of dissociation that has already set in. It cannot be checked unless New York will recognize that the hinterland of America is no longer New York's hinterland. But it is, as it has always been, the West, or the Southwest, where lands were golden once, and for dwellers there, self-reliant and not without a power of their own, they are golden still.

(*To be continued*)

Liberty and Authority: A Political Essay

Ross J. S. Hoffman

This essay may begin with a statement of what should be an elementary and obvious truth, but is for many of us, unfortunately, a rather odd and startling truth. All really serious political and sociological thinking inevitably reposes on a theory of human nature. That is the odd and startling truth, although it means simply that the problems of what men are and how they may best realize the development of their nature have got to be solved in some manner before a rational attack can be made on the problem of a satisfactory organization of human society. To put this even more obviously, no political or sociological theorist can keep his thinking in conformity with the nature, needs, and high permanent interests of human beings, unless he has first determined what these are. For the man who proposes a certain kind of state or social organization is really proposing, substantially, that we build a house for ourselves, to live in, and it therefore makes rather a good deal of difference what kind of beings we are. A barn is a quite suitable house for cattle but hardly a desirable home for man; which suggests at once the great political importance of that philosophic and religious question as to whether man is merely one of the animals. But even if the theorist resolves this question in favour of man as something significantly more than an animal, and thus rejects the plan for building a barn, there will remain a variety of houses from which to choose. So that if the theorist regards mankind as criminal he may devise a political plan along the lines of a penitentiary; or if he thinks mankind crazy he may suggest something resembling a lunatic asylum. But whatever he proposes, if it is to contain any sense at all, will bear ultimately upon what he considers man to be. In short, no man can be a really serious political thinker unless he first attempts an answer to the deepest of human questions. First things come first, and back of all politics and sociology lie philosophy and religion; which is what Karl Marx meant when he said that the beginning of all criticism is the criticism of religion.

Now this is to be a political rather than a philosophic or religious essay, but in obedience to the order I have insisted upon I must begin with a reference to these necessary first things. It will be admitted readily by all who are familiar with modern political thought that the nineteenth century saw a gradual estrangement between politics and philosophy. To my own mind that is not stating the fact very well, for I should prefer to say that politics was widowed by the death of philosophy. But however this estrangement is characterized or explained, the fact of it had become so evident by the time of the late European War that Professor W. A. Dunning could speak of political speculations as having become "radically unintelligible". And after the War Professor Herbert Schneider observed that, "Whether from disillusionment or from fatigue or from uncertainty, there is an evident disinclination to draw political conclusions from philosophic systems. . . . Curiously enough both politicians and philosophers heave a sigh of relief. Philosophers are rid of their moral burden and politicians of the tiresome task of seeking sanctions." To be sure, we have had in our times (as never before in the history of the world!) a great many so-called philosophers advising and doctoring us for political and social maladies, but they have not actually been philosophers. They have been experimentalists, pragmatists, instrumentalists and what-not, champions of the movement to degrade philosophy to mere scientific methodology — a movement which has been the very negation of the philosophic spirit, and which Arnold Lunn very neatly called the "flight from reason". These "philosophers" shaped modern thought-fashions and got us into the mental habit of begging all the really important questions that can be asked about the essential stuff of human nature. Hence in place of rational political methods, derived from a reasoned (rather than blindly-assumed) theory of human nature, they led us to the pragmatic method which will have nothing to do with first principles. And this method, which consists in proceeding in practice without reference to first principles, we have now been following long enough for discerning minds to see that we had better abandon it. For it simply does not work; it has been found incompetent by its own tests. The "practical" method has proved quite impractical, as anyone may see by looking at the wrecked world about us.

This sort of philosophy (which is really the negation of true philosophy) and its inevitable result in political and sociological methods descended upon us, of course, by way of Liberalism. The old liberals of the last century, especially those of the utilitarian school, were content to base their thinking upon a number of cheerful but immature assumptions about human nature. Disposed toward agnosticism, and lightly ignoring deep questions which we today must face, they overturned all the old authorities in a great effort for human freedom. But when at last these authorities were thoroughly discredited, men found themselves leaderless and teacherless, and the philosophic voices of this revolution had nothing to say but to announce that fact. The result was that men were condemned to obey the dictates of thoughts and desires arising out of a nature which was no longer illuminated by self-knowledge; and there was no possible way for them to go on save in an empirical, experimental fashion. The revolution which destroyed throne and altar, external authorities, went on to extinguish internal authority as well: the authority of reason. It was impossible for the liberal leaders of thought to return upon first principles without encountering the ghosts of old religion, and therefore they would have nothing to do with first principles. So it was that we came upon the method that got us where we now are, and one may confidently assert that if we go on this way much longer, improvising now this adjustment and making now that experiment, but still contemptuous of first principles, our last state shall be worse than the present one. We shall end the way a sick man ends, who will do anything to get relief from pain and a measure of immediate comfort, but will not take the treatment that attacks his disease at the roots.

Those of us, therefore, who are thinking today about our stricken society and incompetent political machinery, will have to return to first principles if we are to be political and social philosophers in earnest. We shall have to go back to philosophy and even to the borderland of religion if we are to bridge anew the gulf that has come between reason and the social sciences. This is necessary because by no other means can we formulate a theory of human nature that can be made the basis for a rational and therefore workable social-political method. In this respect we cannot rightly withhold some admiration from the communists who see clearly the fundamental importance in Marxian sociology of the materialistic, anti-metaphysical doctrine of human nature. This is the reason why communist writers so often display a clarity and depth of mind which contrasts very favourably with the vague irrelevance and superficiality of liberal apologists; and it is also a reason why communism has taken so strong a hold upon large masses of men, for man is a rational being. I do not mean, of course, to minimize in the slightest degree the great importance of the historical method for learning of human nature, for I realize fully that history is the great testing ground for all philosophic theorizing about the nature of man. We must indeed rescue history from the appalling abuses committed upon it by the Marxists and pragmatists, who are very fond of claiming its authority in support of their false philosophy; but it must be learned again, wherever it has been forgotten, that history is a record rather than an explanation of human behaviour.

There are a great many things we have got to recover from the old treasury of rational philosophy, but the one I am mainly concerned with here is a theory of human nature. Just as the Marxists went to a narrow and false philosophy to get their economic-animal theory, so must we who oppose them go to true and rational philosophy for a human and spiritual theory of man's nature. To the extent that we get hold of such a theory we will be consistent and strong in our opposition. But to go on as pragmatists will mean ultimate capitulation to the enemy, for is not the very being of a pragmatist tantamount to accepting the theory that man cannot know himself? And does this not turn out to be virtually one with the economic-animal theory? Basically considered, there are no other possible theories of human nature than the two I have mentioned here. One school of thought holds man to be only the cleverest of the animals and regards his mind as but an organ for manipulating a biological environment; the other sees man as a unique being, possessed of faculties for *knowing* both the universe and himself, and asking for the satisfaction of his nature something more than the "bread alone" by which the animals live. Everyone who thinks through to a conclusion on this subject belongs to one or the other of these schools; although there are, to be sure, various differences within the schools, especially among the humanists, who range from Catholic Christians to non-Christian philosophic idealists. It is no point of this paper to argue the case of one of these schools against the other, but it is a point—and a most important point—that the enormous significance of the issue between the schools be clearly recognized. I am definitely on the humanist side, and indeed sit upon the extreme Catholic Right, and I know quite well that among all on our side there is a very wide agreement as to the needs and permanent interests of human beings. All of us, therefore, will have truth of supreme importance flung into our faces as though it were a lie, if our society relapses into jungle law or if those of the opposite school take full command of the instruments of social authority and the agencies for the formation of culture. We have a large common cause to defend, and it is the means of defending that cause rather than the merits of the struggle which forms the central subject of this paper.

II

It is obvious enough that today people are seeking security above everything else. "They have lived dangerously for twenty years", wrote Walter Lippmann recently, "and the elementary instinct to survive is aroused. This is the energy of their discontent, and so great is it that it will crush anything which seems to stand in the way of relief from the intolerable disturbance of their lives. . . . The surrender of liberty, the disenchantment with democracy, the revival of autocracy, are all manifestations of the same desire: that amidst chaos there shall be organized power to defend them." In saying this, Mr. Lippmann was thinking almost exclusively of the economic crisis, but it should be plain that the words imply a great deal more than a popular cry against material insecurity. There is no mere demand for bread, but a fierce protest against a great unhappiness for which economic wants and hazards constitute but a partial cause. The cry is for security, yes, but for a much larger security than dependable work and reasonable living costs. Whether they articulate it or not, the security for which men are crying is for the whole condition of order and liberty which human nature requires for its fulfilment. Sensitive souls who have been wounded but not too violently ravaged by modern society tell us this plainly in their pleading; but great masses of men and women shriek the truth at us by the condition of their warped and stunted lives. Millions of human beings in the dechristianized world of today are quite ready to trade every remaining shred of liberty for a slavery that promises material security. They have sunk to an almost sub-human state, where they are no longer able to assert their real grievances or to claim their true rights, but only to voice mad demands. The Marxist doctrine that capitalism prepares the way for communism is in no sense so true as in the awful sense that capitalism has brought about the dehumanized man who almost fits the economic-animal theory of human nature. The needs of such men will not be learned merely by asking them what they want, but by considering what they might have been. Human beings who have lived the way the Author of their nature evidently intended them to live know their grievances and rights without having to be told; but twisted and deformed human nature may have to be helped even against its will. A starving man may say that he is only hungry without knowing that he is also very ill. That, briefly, is what we have got to realize if we are to effect genuine social reform and political reconstruction. Starting with a true theory of human nature, we have got to determine what conditions are necessary for that nature to prosper and then erect a power that can secure them.

I do not mean at all that we must conceive a particular social pattern and seek to pour human nature, as it were, into a mould; nor that we must attempt a "planned society". Those are the very errors to be avoided; for when we come to set down a statement of the conditions necessary to the prospering of human nature, the first condition to be named is liberty. Yes, liberty, that goddess whose shrine is so deserted today. If politics ever becomes rational again, there will once more be votive offerings in her temple. The first political principle then will be the philosophic doctrine of the freedom of the human will, and the state will find its whole *raison d'être* in securing to men that freedom which is necessary for the exercise of all the faculties of their nature. Because man is a rational being, the state will secure his intellectual liberty; because he is a moral being, the state will protect his freedom of conscience; because he is an economic being, the state will safeguard his ownership of productive property — since the diffusion of ownership throughout society, instead of concentration in the hands of a few, is the necessary material foundation of liberty. These will be the ends of political action, and everything the state will legitimately do will subserve these ends. Because private property is a necessary foundation for individual liberty, it will be defended – nay, it will be restored; because the family is a necessary school of liberty, it will be protected in every possible way; because religion is a necessary discipline for liberty, it will not merely be tolerated but the freedom of all forms of it which actually serve that end will be most carefully guarded. I might continue much further on this point, but already I can hear some one say that this is only what we heard from the New Liberals of a generation ago and the New Dealers of today, from Lloyd-George, Wilson, and Roosevelt. Actually there is a very great difference, for the state which they used so feebly as an instrument of social reconstruction is very different from the state which I propose here to legitimate. Their vision of a free society may be quite similar to ours, but they have not realized that vision, and we ought now to know the reason for their failure.

The reason is not that they were rulers who failed to use state power rightly, but mere popular leaders in a struggle for liberty who never possessed actual state power at all. They never had real authority because there was no real authority to be had. This may seem a strange saying in view of the discussion one hears everywhere about the encroaching powers of the state, but it ought to be evident what I mean. The liberal-democratic conception of the state, upon analysis, appears virtually at one with the Marxian doctrine of the state as a mere implement of power in the hands of a class. For these men did not say, "Let the state, or the king, that supreme defender of the common good, rule"; rather they said, "Let the people rule." There has been no real state power in the sense of the state being independent of class control since the old monarchies were destroyed in the name of popular sovereignty. When that happened public power was degraded to become the football of social conflict, which of course was usually fought on all sides in the name of liberty. That is the reason why we have had so paradoxical an outcome of the struggle for liberty reaching back into the eighteenth century: namely, that men today feel themselves less free than ever. With all deserved admiration for the old fights for freedom, we may—indeed we must – admit that each time people fought to secure some increased liberty and even achieved their stated objective, they found that they had not really made themselves freer at all, but had only riven the bonds tighter. So that in the present day we have, on the one hand, prophetic voices warning that we are drifting into a new slavery, while on the other hand thousands of persons have come to think that all the old talk about liberty is so much hollow sentiment.

Realizing this, it ought not to be hard for us to see the reason for the failure of the great liberating movement: its complete refusal to admit any authoritarian guardian of liberty. The fighters for liberty could gain victory after victory, but they could not keep the spoils of battle. What they gained on the front was dissipated in the rear by treason behind the lines; or, to use another military analogy, it might be said that although they fought very bravely they neglected to protect their base and therefore at length were surrounded and cut to pieces. The leaders of the liberal-democratic movement thus laboured under two handicaps, and these handicaps explain the great failure. In the first place, they lacked cogently reasoned convictions as to the needs and permanent interests of human nature, having instead only sentimental and uncritical optimism. And secondly, they had no authority apart from leadership; they could do nothing against the will of their followers; they had no power to discipline the ranks of their armies; there was no way for a long-sighted leader authoritatively to overrule a short-sighted mass. Leader after leader was broken and cast aside because he dared to go against the mass demand, which was always pandered to by demagogues of dubious character. Hence every advance toward a freer society was followed by reaction feeding upon disillusionment. There was simply no way in which to raise up a solid rock of prudence, wisdom, and justice in the tumultuous sea of popular conflict. Men could not be persuaded that authority, far from being the necessary enemy of liberty, is actually complementary to it; they could not see that liberty itself perishes unless authority maintains it.

Fortunately there is at last some incipient recognition of our great lack. In the economic field anarchy has grown so intolerable that most of us now do see the imperative need for some power that can act independently for the common good and can thus protect economic liberty by restraining economic licence.

There is Mr. Lippmann, for example, who, although still professing the basic philosophy of pragmatist liberalism, desires government in its economic activities to be "in effect a gigantic public corporation which stands ready to throw its weight into the scales wherever and whenever it is necessary to redress the balance of private transactions". He wants a system of individual economic liberty, which he calls "Free Collectivism", defended by a "compensatory state" which undertakes to maintain an equilibrium. The duty of this state is

> to counteract the mass errors of the individualist crowd by doing the opposite of what the crowd is doing; it saves when the crowd is spending too much, it borrows when the crowd is saving too much; it economizes when the crowd is extravagant, and it spends when the crowd is afraid to spend; it contracts when the crowd is expansive; it becomes enterprising when the crowd is depressed; it buys in sellers' markets and sells in buyers' markets; it taxes when the crowd is hoarding; it becomes an employer when there is private unemployment, and it shuts down when there is work for all. Its ideal is to prevent excess; its general principle is not to impose a social order conceived by officials but to maintain in a changing order, worked out by the initiative and energy of individuals, a golden mean.

The state that behaves in this way is manifestly not one that is responsive to public opinion, but a state that can act independently against the will of the people. It can say to the people that it has the long view, the whole or rounded view, and therefore knows the public interest better than the people themselves know it. Such a state is as far as the poles from the old ideas of liberal democracy, for such a state wields a genuine authority. Mr. Lippmann himself is prepared to concede that it is incompatible with political democracy "in its present manifestations". Indeed, he goes further and says that present-day democracy, unless overhauled, will lead us to ruin "because the apparent interest of temporary majorities cannot be depended upon to safeguard the permanent general interest". So that Mr. Lippmann urges us "to face the conclusion that it is not only capitalism but democracy that has to be reconstructed". I cannot but call his words an acknowledgment that if we are to safeguard what is left of liberty we shall have to abandon liberalism.

Mr. Lippmann's ideas in this matter are not, of course, peculiarly his own in the sense that he originated them or is their sole expounder. They are the common property of the times and the fact is a heartening one. But it cannot be said that the authoritarian implications of these ideas is very generally perceived, not even by Mr. Lippmann. He remains a pragmatist and a liberal and can only suggest in the way of reform a practical device for improving the democratic method: reservation of all legislative initiative in fiscal matters to the executive. Obviously this is a move in the right direction, but it is not an adequate solution of our problem, because we are not searching merely for a device but for an authority. We cannot have the kind of state demanded by Mr. Lippmann without a new kind of social contract. Men of honest conscience can neither wield nor obey a power unless it is sanctioned in what they can respect as an absolute authority. If they hold to the democratic dogma of popular sovereignty they can conscientiously bow to whatever they may recognize as the popular will. But Mr. Lippmann's state must often be moving against that popular will, and the men directing its operations can only justify themselves as executing the popular will by saying that they are doing what the people would want done if the people were wise enough to know their own best interests. This, however, might not be a fact at all, but a quite false assumption. For these state officials might subscribe to such mad doctrines that the people, were they as wise and good as they should be, would want very different measures from those thrust upon them. Surely the sanction for such governmental action does not rest in any popular will at all, but in the reason and conscience of the state officials. A democracy cries out that it is in trouble and cannot extricate itself unaided; it vests authority in a dictator or king who proceeds to inflict some rather painful surgical operations upon the whole social body; perhaps nobody is very well pleased and a majority actually enraged, but the dictator goes on with the operation. Wherein lies the sanction for his acts? He says in effect, "This practice, although most people are reluctant to stop it, is bad, and therefore I will stop it." What is his authority for that action? How is he so sure that it is bad? Whence originates the will to stop it? Obviously the sanction is in the dictator's own conscience, in his own sense of social duty. And the working of that conscience is determined by the dictator's theory of the nature, needs, and high permanent interests of the human beings whose welfare, presumably, he undertakes to guard.

Let us recognize and acknowledge that fact, for that way lies the restoration of genuine authority, so sorely needed today. The liberal-democratic method has failed for want of authority, and we need another method which will provide for that lack. The state exists for the defence of the conditions necessary to human nature, and within its legitimate limits has an absolute authority; which can only be wielded rightly by a wise ruler obeying no authority but his own conscience. Our problem therefore is as simply stated as it is difficult of solution: to determine the true needs of men as human beings and to renew the social contract with a dictatorial power sworn to govern in accordance with those needs. Those who realize that simple truth and work toward that end are helping along the restoration of rational and therefore workable politics.

III

I have insisted in the foregoing that we need a guardian of human liberty, which can only be a political authority acting independently under the dictates of a wise and right conscience. I have also suggested that it is especially in the realm of economic activity that this need is now most clearly recognized. But I did not mean that the need is confined to that realm, nor even that the need is there most acute. And I certainly did not mean that this is, as so many persons think, the fundamental realm of human activity. Economics, in fact, is not fundamental at all; it shows the surface of life, not its interior depths; and I would be quite prepared to argue that present-day economic anarchy is but an exterior sign of a deep internal anarchy of the spirit and intellect, wherein lie the roots of the modern problem. And that is why, before suggesting how our much-needed guardian of liberty is to be raised up, I wish to discuss certain very important duties which must be undertaken by it in the non-economic regions of life. For unless these duties are successfully discharged, we may be sure that the economic mission of the new state will be a hopeless failure.

I said above that it is the legitimate work of a governing power to secure and defend those conditions of life which are necessitated by the demands of human nature, and that this consequently means the protection of intellectual liberty and freedom of conscience as well as economic security. Let us consider what follows from these premises.

By intellectual liberty I do not mean precisely what we are accustomed to think of as freedom of speech, opinion, and press; rather I mean freedom for the mind of man to grow in strength and maturity, developing to the full its powers for discerning reality and truth. And that, I need hardly say, is impossible without a discipline. We have always recognized this truth to a certain extent, else we should never have instituted any formal education at all. Now discipline means doing one thing rather than another, learning from this book or this person because they have something of value to teach, and ignoring another book or another person because they have nothing (or at least nothing worth while) to teach. We have seen the necessity of this, and we have never really believed that one man has as good a right to tell a lie as another man has to tell a truth, or that ignorance has claims on a par with knowledge. Yet in practice the policy of liberalism in this matter of intellectual liberty has actually been to equate the claims of falsehood and truth, ignorance and knowledge, stupidity and wisdom. Liberalism, being at bottom agnostic and negative, has kept the state a neutral spectator, enjoined from entering the ring even as referee of these contests; which policy originated at a time when liberals were so optimistic about man that they could contemplate the arena of intellectual struggle with equanimity. Give light, they said, and the people will find their own way: if liars and fools would deceive, only let truth also be free to speak and all will be well.

But this optimistic hope has been dashed. Today there is no certainty at all that truth can overcome falsehood in an unrefereed fight, with the latter using brass knuckles, hitting below the belt, and inciting its own interested supporters to riot, the while spectators about the ring become so confused they cannot tell one contestant from another. A lie which has ten million dollars of invested cash behind it can make short shrift of the countering truth which has no cash at all. Big business, which rules modern society, can tell any lie it wishes and apparently will tell any lie that may be profitable. It can lie over the ether waves to forty million persons simultaneously, day in and day out, and it can convince countless millions that their own worldly interests are involved in perpetuating its lies. The bankers can lie to us about foreign bonds and make millions; Hollywood can lie to us about morals and make millions; so can every national advertiser and press magnate. The instruments of propaganda – for saying anything at all, be it true or false – are so great and formidable today, and the stakes of the contest are so tremendous, that the old nineteenth-century liberal doctrine on the subject of intellectual liberty dates like the stage coach. A hundred years ago one might have said sensibly enough: "Let the liars and lunatics rave. They will not get far with sensible people who hear their nonsense contradicted." But today the liars and lunatics rave into forty million radios, and the roar is so loud that we can seldom hear the voice of truth and reason even when it is occasionally permitted to speak.

Here is a condition toward which no public power seriously bent on guarding intellectual liberty can remain indifferent. A lie is an intellectual strait-jacket. Every lie that a man believes is a fetter upon his mind, and there will not be much true intellectual liberty the while this unprecedented power for organized, wholesale, mass-production lying remains uncaptured and uncontrolled by an authority determined to make it serve truth and freedom. This means that the rightly reformed state will see a duty in protecting the sources of public information from contamination, and that it will fix certain conditions which must be complied with before anyone is entitled to address his fellow citizens publicly on matters of social consequence. There will be a right to voice opinion, yes, but that right will have to be earned by the discharge of duty; and if the right is abused it may be subject to revoke. Indeed it will be regarded as the franchise is now regarded, not as a right at all but as a privilege. This means that there will be rules of order and discipline in the great public world of information and communication. We have learned a great deal since the cheerful day when John Stuart Mill could write that the time had gone by "when any defense would be necessary of the 'liberty of the press' as one of the securities against corrupt or tyrannical government". Nothing in the great *Essay on Liberty* dates more unmistakably than this, for today it has actually come to be a question of how the freedom of government can be maintained against a monopolistic, lying, selfish, and debasing press. What is required, therefore, is a very different theory of intellectual liberty from the old liberal theory. The coming state will have to be on the side of truth and honesty; it will have to proceed against liars as it now (occasionally) proceeds against thieves.

I know that what I have said here will seem a very dangerous doctrine even to many who desire the establishment of an authoritarian state defending a positive theory of human nature. I shall be accused of proposing a general destruction of particular liberties in pursuit of some theoretical liberty, and of opening the gate not merely to authority but to tyranny. But I am not doing that at all, for the new state's duty to act in defence of disciplined intellectual liberty is corollary to the grave duty of acting in defense of freedom of conscience; and written in the bond of the new social contract must be the right, nay, the duty, of resistance in case this is trampled upon. But here again a definition is in order, for by freedom of conscience I do not mean freedom to call wrong right and right wrong; rather I mean freedom to do one's duty in accordance with an honest conscience. The state here envisaged will have a positive, if somewhat narrowly limited, code of right morals; this it will actively defend, and those who cannot assent to that code cannot have voice in public affairs; by which I do not mean mere political affairs. Simple expediency will determine whether they may be coerced into silence, but the principle of respect for free conscience will protect them from coercion into conformity. That is to say, the state will respect the conscience even of its conscientious objectors, although it will not necessarily grant them any privileges of propaganda.

In short, the state will welcome the honest criticism of its friends, but it will not necessarily tolerate the attacks of its enemies. There is no way to avoid this, once it is admitted that the state has an ethical duty, and indeed no one can rightly say that there is here, in principle, any infringement of free conscience. Those who can give assent to the basic morals defended by the state are guaranteed full freedom to live their lives and do their duties according to the dictates of conscience. The state requires not a spineless mass of yes-citizens, but brave and honest men who dare to speak their minds, for no state can long survive the absence of such moral freedom among its citizens. Moreover, it is only upon the ruler's respect for this freedom that the social contract can retain its validity; for if the freedom is violated there is a right of forcible resistance sharing the same sanction possessed by public authority. And as for those who place themselves in fundamental opposition to the new state, surely there is no assault upon their freedom of conscience in a simple exclusion of them from all public influence. In the liberal state of party government we do not think it wrong for the successful party to put the unsuccessful party out of office. The new state will simply do that with its opposition, only much more completely and over a wider field, for it will recognize a much larger conflict than the mere struggle over government jobs. It will not be merely a new party in control of the old governmental system; it will be a new state with real authority, and determined to act in behalf of a restored and just social order, in which men and women can live lives befitting the dignity of human nature. Therefore those who oppose such a state and such an order for conscience's sake will have to take the position of a tolerated but silent minority; and there will be no more injustice in this, nor lack of respect for free conscience, than there was in the exclusion of the Jews (as a religious minority) from the general public life of old Christendom.

Under the state which I envisage there will be a great deal more freedom of conscience than the modern liberal state is any longer able to offer. It is no defence of intellectual liberty and free conscience to cling to liberalism against the authoritarian state which I am advocating. For the liberal state has shown itself helpless against the return of human slavery which is brought about by undisciplined industrial capitalism, and what old things of human freedom survive that revolution have been permitted to survive only on condition of subservience and impotence. The intellect of man is bent to do whatever service the slave masters require; morality obeys whatever power can threaten economic position (instance the survival of marriage on terms of birth control); religion becomes neglected and even hated because it may be preached but rarely if ever practised; and almost the only sincere and honest thing, which really is what it professes to be, is commercial keenness. Indeed it has come to pass that people no longer talk much of a freedom fitting to man; they talk instead about leisure; and it is very significant that they do so, for slaves are worthy of leisure. But free men know that leisure is not liberty, and they ought to know also that if ever they are to regain the liberty that has been lost they will have to fashion a mighty sword of righteous authority to sever the tightening bonds.

These are the reasons why the real friends of true human liberty today must join forces for an assault upon the abusive forms which the old liberties have taken. There is not one of those old liberties (for which so much blood was gloriously spent) that has not been exploited in behalf of selfish special interests against the general common interest – not one which is not used today as a cover for some anti-social activity. All have been so licentiously misused that the time has come when the organic structure of society will no longer bear the strain, and if they are not curbed that structure will break. To effect such a curb no new principle need be invoked, but rather a fresh application of an old principle, best defined perhaps by the high priest of liberalism himself, Mill, when he declared "that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightly exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others." That principle is still sound, although the form of application needed for it today requires an action which Mill might have grieved to witness. Like all the old liberals Mill never had an adequate grasp upon the organic nature of human society, which he tended to see as a mere sum of individuals; not perceiving the deeper regions of that network of relationships between individuals – spiritual, intellectual, cultural, as well as economic – which constitutes what might be called the nervous system of the organic social body. Today those depths may be seen, and therefore we should realize the need for a new definition of the limits of individual liberty and a new social discipline. No power can any longer actually defend society and promote the cure of its diseases without invading these deeper regions of human life.

I know that what I say may horrify many good persons, not least my own co-religionists who fear the power of the modern state more than anything else in the world. But they should bear in mind that the state envisaged here is neither the old secular, atheistic state nor the new state of religious nationalism and racialism. It is rather a humanistic and ethical state, sworn to alliance with good morals and civilized religion, having much more in common with the early mediaeval monarchies and the Holy Roman Empire than with the modern laicized, bureaucratic state. Therefore it does not merit the old distrust which Catholics have so often manifested toward the civil power. And surely one may ask these apprehensive Catholics what alternative is to be found, if this new authoritarian state is to be rejected? With what other weapon can the great battle for justice and true liberty be fought? Or is the battle to be waged only in the souls of isolated individuals? And if so, what of the souls of the weaker ones who need support in an unequal struggle? In the great ages of Catholic action the sons of the Church did not shrink from the most violent efforts to make justice prevail in this world; certainly that was not the way of Saint Louis, whom I think we would do well to invoke in this dark hour. Those Catholics who, for fear of a new tyranny, take their stand by the old abusive liberties, I strongly suspect will make the same mistake their forefathers made in clinging too closely to the old abusive authorities. The Faith at one time unhappily became mixed up in men's minds with the corrupt *ancien régime*. There is need of care lest it become similarly entangled in the anarchy of the liberal era now drawing to a close.

To all other liberals and quasi-liberals, who are aware of the emergence of anarchy and barbarism in our society but yet shrink from the new state as a despotism, one may recall that Mill himself regarded even despotism as "a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end". Until such time as men become worthy of liberty he could offer them nothing but "implicit obedience to an Akbar or a Charlemagne, if they are so fortunate as to find one". Mill, of course, was entirely persuaded that Western nations in his time had long since attained the stage where they were capable of continuous improvement by the widest measure of individual freedom, and with his characteristic nineteenth-century assumption of steady human progress it did not occur to him that they might fall back again. But we may be fairly certain of what he would have replied to such a question as this: "Suppose a society, having advanced to being worthy of certain large liberties, should slip back into anarchy, moral decay, and loss of care about liberty. What then?" Mill did not think it necessary to consider that question, but we who live at the end of the liberal era had better consider it. For the barbarians are returning upon us, rising up from the cellars of our palaces built with shameful gold, and it may well be that we shall once again have to endure the law in order to gain the redemption.

IV

If it be admitted that I have rightly stated our dangers and our needs, we are ready to raise the question of what may be done. Obviously there is no solution but a revolutionary solution, for the tottering American political system of today is perhaps the best demonstration of those anti-authoritarian principles which have brought about the wreckage of modern society. There must be a revolution – a constructive revolution in behalf of authority, order, and justice; and there is no dodging that fact. For we are not faced with a choice of alternatives between the present moribund liberal-democratic order and a revolutionary effort. The chief point to be made about the present order is that it cannot last, that it must end in some kind of revolution. Our real choice therefore is confined to the several possible kinds of revolution. We may get one from the proletarian Left or from the propertied, capitalist Right, and in either case a holocaust will be made of most of the liberties which are needful to men as human and not mere animal beings. Our present policy of pragmatic expediency can have no other end than this: that when breakdown and ruin are plainly in sight (so that not just a few but all can see it), some group, with a conviction and a self-arrogated authority, will take charge of us and attempt to do for the American democracy what it cannot do for itself, namely, erect a government that can actually govern. That is the reason why the only important question is what sort of group this will be. In my own opinion, if the New Deal leads us to bankruptcy and thus delivers us over to a liberal reaction, that reaction will lead straight to a revolutionary swing far to the extreme Left, very likely within the next decade. In America, such a development could have but one result: violent civil war and the fastening upon the country of the blackest kind of dictatorship by wealth. Then indeed would the last hope for a free America be gone. On the other hand, if the New Deal does not bankrupt us but continues to develop a disposition among the people to thrust every sort of responsibility upon the government, we shall have a gradual sovietizing of the nation, with consequences equally fatal to the hope of a free America. At one or the other of these ends we must inevitably arrive, unless we exert a powerful will to avoid both, by establishing a strong authoritarian government which can and will destroy the enemies of human liberty on both Right and Left.

There is but one way to do this, and that is by the rise of a revolutionary association of men sworn to an absolute political and social creed; men of patriotism and tested character, who are entirely convinced that the whole duty of the state is to establish and maintain the conditions requisite to the free growth of man as a human being; men capable of disinterested and chivalric conduct, who ask nothing for themselves save that which they are determined that the state shall guarantee for all; men who will fight for the rights of others while thinking only of duty for themselves; men who can submit to a discipline, who can obey as well as command. Such a body of political soldiers, granting to a brave leader, by contractual oaths, wide powers not merely of leadership but of command, might be able to restore the state and the social order. And when they had proved themselves, the nation would not be slow in associating itself with their oaths, thus renewing the social contract, which is the only legitimate foundation for government.

I do not mean a swashbuckling "shirt" organization on the European Fascist model, filling the streets with noise and beating up communists. Every such organization in America quickly becomes the prey of demagogues, fanatics, anti-Semites, Pope-baiters, and other scoundrels. Such methods and aims are utterly abhorrent to the kind of man who could really aid a movement to renew the political and social life of our country. No, what I am thinking of is an entirely legal organization composed of serious and noble-minded men who would frankly ask the American nation to consent to a political revolution for the purpose of sanctioning an authority strong enough to establish justice in the land. Such a body would not be laying plans for a *coup d'état*, but carrying on a propaganda directed toward gaining a mandate at the polls. It would scrupulously respect the existing democratic system until called upon to help modify or end it, but meanwhile it would work ceaselessly to expose the corruption, waste, incompetence, and hypocrisy of that system. Its propaganda would be entirely public and its criticism both fundamental and shockingly frank. It would seek to enlist the best available minds for laying bare the scandalous sinecures, frauds, grabs, and rackets that pass for government in our state, county, and municipal political units. It would leave no stone unturned to bring the full light of day upon the corrupt alliance between politics, business, and the so-called "better" people in every American community. It would drive home the great truth that all splendid efforts for the New Deal are almost certain to founder on the rocks of corrupt democratic politics. It would show how even so brave and true a man as Mr. Roosevelt, with all the power that is his on paper, cannot realize his splendid aims for the country because he is caged in a system that simply cannot be made to work for the common good. It would turn a devastating barrage of searching criticism upon this fantastic economic system in which no way has yet been found to block those crooked paths by which the rich get their hands into the pockets of the poor. It would tirelessly refute those lies both of fact and of doctrine which, day in and day out, are drummed into American minds by a thousand false prophets. But above everything else it would drive home the central truth of supreme importance that nothing can be done without an instrument of authority, and that such an instrument must be fashioned. To such a doctrine I believe the ear of America might be induced to listen, and if so, all that is needed is the men of honour and courage who will thunder it forth.

Farming: A Variety of Religious Experience

R. L. Burgess

Friends of the amateur farmer ask him when he is going to come to his senses. He could be living at ease as they do, with no chores facing them when they get back to the apartment after a hard day's work at the office. Or if they are commuters as he is, they explain how simple it is to have a landscape gardener plant everything at the start; then you just have a man come in once a week or so to keep things shipshape.

When friends are dining at his house, they tell him politely that this is wonderful broccoli he has raised on his little place. He flushes and admits that his wife bought the vegetable in town. The bugs, he explains, always eat the broccoli he tries to raise.

They know he keeps chickens, so they congratulate him on the tenderness of the bird they are eating. His wife laughs, and says they didn't raise the chicken either. They set their hens late last year, on account of the rush at the office just at the beginning of the hatching season, then one old biddy left her nest unaccountably after sitting ten days, rats got a second nest, and a gopher snake swallowed all the eggs in another. By that time it was too late to set any more hens, as young chicks don't do well in hot weather.

At the end of the meal the unhappy host sees his guests eyeing the large and handsome walnuts, and knows that they are wondering if these were produced on his six trees. Agonizedly he informs them that try as he could, he failed to get the trees irrigated properly, and besides, a confounded tree squirrel showed up just before harvest time and carried off what few nuts did develop. The wife then adds that she doesn't intend to let that squirrel be shot, either, because it's so cute, and none of their farming ever comes to anything but a lot of fun, anyway.

The amateur farmer then boasts that after all, he does grow pretty good carrots and spinach. Not regular spinach, you understand, for he's never had much luck with that. But the New Zealand variety, which really isn't a true spinach at all, but tastes pretty good if you like greens. Then a candid guest volunteers:

"A moron couldn't go wrong on growing New Zealand spinach. It just grows in spite of all the mistakes one can make. I saw a lot of it one time that had gone wild and was growing on the beach at San Diego."

"In short," says another friend triumphantly, "you manage to grow a few carrots, and that's about all. Every once in a while when eggs are cheap, you get a few eggs from your own yard. On my way here, I saw whole fields of broccoli, chicken houses where there were thousands of hens, and superb walnut groves. All these things are grown so efficiently by specialists that you can't possibly compete with them. Why, I was reading a piece in the paper the other day about how they use airplanes now to dust peas for bugs. That's in keeping with the sort of methods you use yourself when you're attending to your own specialty down at the office. But to save my soul, I can't see why you work so hard and so inefficiently here at home just for the privilege of spending a lot of money and suffering disappointment."

The amateur farmer gestures helplessly. Finally he replies:

"There's more to it than that."

But what this more is, he finds himself quite unable to explain to these scoffers.

II

The amateur farmer has to admit to himself that he and his fellow enthusiasts work incessantly for a small cash return or large deficit. They rise before dawn to milk, to plant, and to fight weeds by lantern light. They slave again in the darkness before retiring, to get the chores out of the way so that next morning they will be free to make one more effort to catch up. For while in the city even on complicated jobs they often get ahead of their work, at home on their bogus farms they are always days, weeks, months, and even years behind. Time is stolen if it is ever used for a pleasure trip or for a little reading or conversation.

The man who is shackled to the routine of a "recreation farm" cannot stay overnight in the city and attend the symphony. He must hurry home to tend the milk animals. Nor can he see a play and return by late train, for then he will sleep so late in the morning that the plowman will not be hired and instructed in time now that the early rains have softened the soil and the impending next downpour has not made it too muddy; or the fruit trees will not get pruned and sprayed before the buds begin to swell again, the hen will not be set nor the cockerels culled, the manure turned under nor the compost watered, the goat bred, the gladioli bulbs dug and labeled, the alfalfa limed, and gophers trapped before they get the artichokes.

On the train, while other commuters read a magazine or play bridge, the amateur farmer must be leafing agricultural bulletins and books by specialists, trying to find out why the tomatoes after making such a good start went into that untimely wilt; and just what is the trick for harvesting and storing pears so that they will keep. When he finds he has made a blunder the day before at the office, he realizes that the reason he did so was because he was obsessed with the effort to decide whether he should trellis his blackberries again this year by winding the bearing canes in spirals around both upper and lower wires and let the new canes lie on the ground, or put the bearing canes on the lower wire and the new canes on the upper one. And if on his way to lunch in the city he sees perfect Bellflower apples ridiculously cheap on the fruit stands, he remembers that every one of his own Bellflowers had a worm this year because last spring he failed to keep up with that exacting schedule of calyx spraying for the codling moth; and that moreover the time has now arrived when if he is to stay the ravages of the woolly aphis upon those same apples he must dig round the roots of the tree and pour in gallons of nicotine sulphate solution if he could only remember the place where he put that formula for mixing it.

"I wonder", he speculates as he hurries home to slaughter a rabbit, "why I *do* go to all this useless trouble?"

III

At last the slow thought comes to the amateur that what we have known as farming in the past is being broken in two: the factory hand is taking over the production, and the commuter is absorbing the tradition. And this tradition is important, he decides, for while farming is usually discussed as an economic matter, it has long been at least partly a form of religious art. Not only in the New Testament is it that the sower going forth to sow is beheld with reverence. Even the crassest city dweller sees a mystical fire about the head of the manservant of Mother Earth. We dare not confess our piety as did the American Indian who told an early explorer, "When women plant corn, it grows, because women know how to produce children." Yet we hamper modern agronomic manufacturing, as it might be called, by clinging to the superstition that a personage of peculiar and ineffable status called "the farmer" must continue to perform rites connected with certain extractive industries.

Men following these industries for their main livelihood need elasticity of social character as do all modern men. "The farmer" as a mystical figure, man of sorrows of the soil, priest with hereditary status and unyielding traits, is become a nuisance. This arrant holiness of the husbandman as Representative Man addressing the Great Mother with incantations must be driven from economic thought. There remains for it a place as depository of emotions avowedly aesthetic and religious. And it is to the amateur of the soil that the priestly function falls.

For as Daniel Boone lives to inspire Boy Scouts to daily good deeds, so does the farmer flourish in suburban legend, folk-hero of the commuter, leavener of our metropolitan culture with earthy sanctitudes.

The farmer should be recognized for what he is: a symbolic figure summating the history of the pre-machine age. While the experts do not hold in such literal detail as they once did to the notion that man was first hunter, then herder, then tiller of the soil, they still observe in the life of existent tribes tendencies which prove the value of that old hypothesis as a rough schematization of history's course. Hunters are seen becoming herdsmen as game grows scarce, even as Daniel Boone himself gave way before folk who in the newly cleared wilderness tended their thrifty cow-pens. And farther west in America the disputes over range and water between the disappearing cow men and the advancing irrigationists make it needless to consult the story of savage tribes to illustrate the change from herdsman to farmer.

Such economic shifts often stir up religious zealotry on behalf of the old régime. Our western sheepmen's disapproval of agricultural settlers finds a prototype in the scorn with which Hebrew shepherds fresh from the nomadic life of the desert regarded the long-established Baals presiding over fields and vineyards and high places of agricultural Canaan. To the great prophets of Israel who voiced the sheepherding ethic and ritual, the ways of agriculture seem as newfangled, dangerous, and immoral as city life now seems to many a preacher in rural Tennessee or Iowa. For as Hebrew leaders conserving the free range religion once made their stand against the corrupting ways of agriculture, so the agriculturist himself is now struggling to retain his ancient habits in the seemingly godless world of the machine.

Farming absorbed herding in Canaan and in most other lands. The American farmer has long done his herding in the form of chores, tending his animals night and morning, devoting only a short portion of the day to a function that once occupied men's entire time. The farmer who slaughters his own pork or poultry thereby disposes briefly of a residue of the still earlier vocation of hunting. Thus the farmer's activity is made up of the merger of at least three vocations.

Having long ago combined these three callings, the farmer has remained stationary as a simple and archaic social type. He has hated and envied the adaptable characters created by city life. He in turn has been scorned and idealized by his urban rivals.

This traditional dualism of social life is now breaking up, our amateur farmer perceives. Yokel and cockney, violently contrasted rural and urban types of character, are destined to disappear. As the farmer at last gathered up earlier vocations into his work and ritual, so the modern commuter, free citizen of the world tied neither to pavement nor to soil, but cheerfully utilizing the values of both, will ultimately absorb all that is good in the farmer's tradition. Even as the herdsmen's prophets of Israel gave to the new agricultural régime inspiring traditions and a restorative contact with the great God of the desert and the stars, so will the cramped and excessively specialized type of city dweller be refreshed and enlarged by the new contact with agrarian tradition which automobile and radio are bringing about. That vast grab-bag of cultural potentialities and renewals which we call the love of Nature guarantees to the expiring farmer for ages to come a heavenly career as symbolic leader and eponymous hero of tribes hunting for wholesomeness.

The farmer, in short, our amateur decides, is already more priest than producer. Economic theory and industrial practice will break down and redistribute his functions as producer. Religious theory and social custom will integrate and simplify his rôle as priest. The result will be that until the next great secular change occurs, there will be less confusion in discussion and more pleasure in living.

IV

The farmer is of course not unique in exercising a symbolic function. Ritual and mythology are soon evoked by any human activity. The city arts of manufacture and distribution have notoriously built up their own ethics and, what is more to the present point, their own ecstasy. Dionysian fire is more urgent in the great city vocations than in agriculture. Urban Rotarians and communists are creative mythologizers; farmers tend to be rhetors of an old and somewhat limp legend. City folk are under a pressure of raptly felt immediacy having more the quality of the early Franciscan movement or of vital Methodism than of the wistful neo-Catholicism which is analogous to the cult of the farmer in his decaying cosmos.

Even perdurably important symbols do lose glitter with the passing of ages, the amateur farmer realizes one day in church. The farmer's products, beautifully memorialized in grape and wheat on the Christian altar, cannot compete symbolically any more than economically with manufacture and distribution as givers of ecstasy, a sense of being on top of the wave or at centre of the atom's flux. It is as though every age were illuminated by a huge lamp of some special colour of its own. All objects viewed in that age are inevitably drenched in this pervasive light. And it is from manufacture and distribution, hitherto concentrated in the large modern city, that this light streams upon us today. All souls must be bathed in it or become sterile. The farm's green shining is but a candle before the fane of a minor cult. It is useless to dream, as some romantic agrarians do, that this pale glow could be so increased that again it would fill men's hearts with light. But since this cult, although not the major one of our age, is of permanent value, there is good reason for abandoning pretense that it is a wholly practical or economic affair. Account it ritualistic rather than industrial, and clarity of purpose in conserving it is gained.

Moreover, there is good economic reason for setting the cult of the farm off to one side from the practical business up to this time transacted by the farm. The old folkway of farming must be thrown into the furnace, its resistant core melted, and the metal poured into new moulds. What economic integrity the old-fashioned farm seems to possess is the product of social custom, now decaying, rather than of living industrial necessity. Farming is not a coherent and self-sustaining art, but a miscellaneous assortment of skills, routines, habitudes. This congeries should be subjected to administrative analysis and redistribution of components just as in the old-fashioned agriculture itself any particular chore might be studied and improved by an enterprising farmer.

A doctrine which might be called economic pluralism is needed at this point to prevent the dominant mood from running off into fanaticism. If much pleading for the farm has a secret religious bias, much of the assault upon it proceeds from the same type of zealotry running in a nearby channel. The coloured light of this era must have its drastic way with us all so completely, according to the bigoted feeling of some of its prophets, that there will be left nowhere any cooling shadows wherein older ways and satisfactions may flourish. This fanaticism must not be allowed to forbid the social expense of supporting the farm as a sort of established church, let us say, a stylized aesthetic-ritualistic object like the golf links which at the very least does no harm and in all probability does much good.

V

Separation of the economic and symbolic functions of the farmer is taking place all about us. The farmer's body, as it were, is being translated to the industrial-commercial sphere; his aureole to the museum of exemplary traditions. Economic realism is creating the industrialized farm. Aesthetic mysticism—another name for religion—is evolving the small farm home such as our amateur farmer possesses and is possessed by. Or perhaps one prefers to use throughout the myths and dogmas of economics: then it might be said that producers' necessities are creating the industrialized farm, and consumers' necessities the recreation farm. Those twin urban arts, manufacture and distribution, have in the realm of production brought into existence the modern agronomic factories. In the consumer's sphere they have compelled the setting up of small farm homes, partially self-sustaining: in such places of residence the process of blind consumption is slowed down and mixed with wholesome labour; the consumer may thus hope to digest the flood of products and especially of services and privileges brought him by the city.

The industrialized farm or agronomic factory flourishes already in many parts of America. There are vast cotton-producing establishments in Texas which make the contemporary cotton patches of Alabama and Georgia seem legends from centuries gone by. There are immense mechanized wheat industries in Kansas. Remarkable co-operative managing methods have been introduced in New Jersey into the administration of clustered plots individually owned but managed from a center of research. In California from the start the tendency has been for growers to become specialists in one crop, and to combine in marketing associations to the management of which many growers—often men who have had business or industrial careers before they become farmers—devote more attention than to the problems of production. At times the structure and psychology of these co-operatives is barely distinguishable from that of a private business corporation. And we have all heard much of the Russian attempt to replace inefficient holdings of the peasantry with huge state enterprises.

There is beauty in these great projects, our amateur farmer thinks, whether they be the dream acres of the Soviet commissars, or the vast rice fields of America with airplanes raining seed upon them from the sky. They are beautiful as is his own industry in the city. There glows upon them the full light of this era. There is therefore much immediate joy in the conceiving and execution of them. For they are of the future—that is, the present in its joyous moment of emergence; and the old agrarian cult is of the past—that is, the present subsiding into appreciation of itself. One gives the ecstasy of participation, the other the serenity of contemplation. And most of us animals prefer ecstasy.

Thus the industrialized farm is inexorably developing wherever the task in hand is production. But where the task is that of consuming the products and services and privileges of the machine era, the commuter appears, the week-end gardener, the part-time farmer, the "half-way-back-to-the-land" enthusiast. As most of us prefer to chew our own food although we might sustain life with hypodermic injections or tablets of predigested material, so these folk prefer to grow at least part of their food. In the process they not only restore that traditional sense of kinship with Nature which they felt themselves losing in the city, but also dramatize and make more pleasurable the consumption of urban goods and immunities. These include, to name only a few of the more obvious things, police and fire protection, gas, electric light and power, transportation, leisure resulting from efficiency in manufacturing, specialization and improvements of plants, flowers, and animals achieved in city laboratories. And all these require for their satisfactory consumption some purposive labour on the consumer's part, just as the utilization of paint, palette, and canvas demands exertion of the artist. Also there is needed a fair amount of elbow room and opportunity for giving play to individual notions. And so, as the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in a booklet entitled "The Small Farm Home" succinctly puts it, "they have secured these little places in an effort to create better living conditions for their children and themselves, knowing that semi-rural environment has all of the advantages of the city, with none of the limitations of urban surroundings".

The forces, then, which are turning the old-fashioned farm into a kind of factory are turning many homes into a semblance of the old-fashioned farm. If the city has reached out and transformed the country, the country is beginning to reach in and transform the city. And it is interesting to note that Los Angeles, leading producer of mechanized drama and headquarters of the huge vegetable farms supplying New York by rail and airplane, is also a centre for development of the small farm home.

VI

The old-fashioned farm is the fortress of the old-fashioned home. The traditional belief that this is so has crystallized in the Chamber-of-Commerce phrase, "farm home", cited above. The term hints at a merging of two threatened institutions. And this, as already suggested, seems to be what is taking place. Farm and home are each become too weak to stand alone. Yet they may well be reckoned social forms of enduring value. The farm supplies education concerning nature, the home concerning man. The home ceased to be a producing unit early in the industrial revolution. The farm has been slower in surrendering to the factory. Ever since the home became merely a consuming unit, it has been notoriously an open question whether it would survive. But the vestige of the farm if added to the remnant of the home supplies that modicum of at least seemingly productive effort which is needed to dramatize consuming. Thus home is made interesting, centre of significant activities, and its chance of survival is strengthened.

Hunting, fishing, hiking, motoring, and even golf supply some wholesome experience of nature. But they fail to provide, the amateur farmer feels, in sufficient and persistent fashion the illusion of productivity which the farm does provide. The religious roots of existence, the nexus of the soul of man with the brute and with the minerals of the soil and with the sap of plants are more visible on the farm than in these other amusements or than in the city's vocations. Patient labour with earth, animals, and plants convinces the farmer of the depth and steadfastness of the old inscrutabilities. There is thus some basis for the prejudice that the farmer lives in an integrated and organic way, his tasks and his pleasures more vitally joined than are those of city folk. Where the city man is eager to finish his stint and then turn to some entirely different activity for entertainment, the farmer finds his recreation in the refinement and extension of the processes of his daily work. The agrarian philosophers are right: there remains a wholeness of life, an integration of activity, in farm work which is not found in city vocations. Virgil in the Georgics draws a charming picture of the farmer and his wife happily continuing their labours into the night; modern poets are not quick to sketch similar pictures of the factory hand eager to go on with his work after the evening whistle blows. Nor does this conflict with the statement made earlier in this article that there is more immediate ecstasy in urban than in rural life. For this ecstasy rarely has as its cause the mechanism or routine of labour. There is a specialization in the city not only of tasks, but of periods of time: boredom for the work period, and pleasure for the play period. The farmer is more willing to work all the time, and get his pleasure as he goes along, because, as he tells you, "there is nothing else to do".

As the farm supplies digestible experience with nature, so does the home provide assimilable amounts of experience with man. As the farmer plays while producing, and thereby educates and enlarges himself, the home-dweller plays while consuming–and plays in an arena the right size for him. For the home is a small stage upon which the individual can enact his rôle with some confidence that he will have interested spectators and collaborators who will help him develop his art of consuming the goods of this world and of transforming them into spiritual welfare. The danger has long been, with those classes above the bare subsistence level, that the home would be so flooded with material goods, or with the crudest of desire for them, that this art of consuming would break down and become a mere muddle of possessions or appetites. It is at this crucial point that the farm, or that symbolic remnant of it which the commuter adds to his home, creates the sense or at least the satisfactory illusion of productivity and gives zest to what is basically the consuming function of the home. The farm home, then, elastically conceived, and modified from time to time, would seem to have a significant rôle to play in the future through its capacity for keeping one in touch with both nature and man, with both outdoors and indoors.

Man, however, is more elastic than any theory about him. We must therefore beware of identifying home with the single-family dwelling and the current successive divorce system, as though these were essential conditions of a true home. Nor must we feel that there is no true farm, or essence of the farm's spiritual service to man, without old Dobbin and the corn-husking bees of old. Our minimum definition of home should be something not much more elaborate than this: appropriate headquarters for a group small enough and stable enough to school the developing personality in useful and satisfactory customs. It is possible that folk might live in apartment houses sheltering a thousand families, and by access to convenient gardens more perfectly gain the spiritual qualities once imparted by the old farm life than could people living in isolated but city-coerced hovels on farms seemingly of the old-fashioned type but actually gutted of all significance, economic or spiritual. We must be, not superstitious, but truly religious, holding fast to the spirit, benefiting by both chlorophyl and industry, nature and man.

And so the amateur farmer has no reason to feel ashamed. He may not always grow good broccoli, but he is happily tilling regions which seem to many but barren fields, and he is harvesting and planting seed-corn of a civilization not a weedy growth but profoundly rooted in the earth. Therefore that night when he returns from the office and finds that the cockerels have got in and ruined the turnips he planted and tended by lantern light, he smiles, dons his slicker, goes out in the rain to milk the goat, and repeats what he had said to his friends at table: "There's more to it than that." Only this time there is no uncertainty in his tone. He knows his place in nature and in society.

Portrait of a Southern Planter: 1920–1932

George Marion O'Donnell

There have been numerous objections to the agrarian economy proposed for the South by the authors of *I'll Take My Stand*. And perhaps the objection most frequently voiced is that this economy, however good it may have been once as a way of life, is no longer applicable to the quite practical – and sometimes bitter – business of securing a living by tilling the Southern soil in the twentieth century. Such an objection is purely economic, and it sidesteps one of the main issues that is raised by *I'll Take My Stand*: the spiritual and cultural issue of whether the South is to retain its integrity as an economic and cultural unit with a distinctive tradition (in the sense of a living past, manifest in present modes of conduct), or whether it is to succumb before the onslaughts of a civilization representing a sectional conquest by an industrial East that is bent on enforcing its economy upon a people temperamentally unsuited to it. However, despite the evasive character of the objection, it may be well to consider a case history of agrarianism in the twentieth-century South, merely as a matter of historical interest.

No generalization about the South is ever completely true. There are within the section itself such various elements (racial, geographical, and climatic) that broad statements are almost invariably untenable. What is true of the delta section of Mississippi and

Louisiana and Arkansas may not be true of the hills of Kentucky and Tennessee; what is true of Florida may not be true of Alabama; what is true of the French-dominated region along the Gulf coast may not be true of the mountains of North Carolina, dominated by Scotch-Irish stock. But if the life of the Southern planter of the twentieth century be considered dispassionately, along with the difficulties that beset that life, it becomes fairly obvious that the virtues and pleasures of farm life today are substantially those virtues and pleasures that the authors of *I'll Take My Stand* find good. And the dangers to the successful pursuit of that life are substantially those dangers that the authors of *I'll Take My Stand* emphasize as unpleasant manifestations in the South of the dominance of industrialism in national life. Perhaps the case history of the Huntingtons and their land will at once clarify and substantiate this assertion.

II

Huntington Plantation is situated in the delta country of Mississippi, in what I shall call Nanah-Wahya County, not far from the Mississippi River which threatens it annually and floods it every fifteen years (1882, 1897, 1912, 1927 are the dates of the last four general overflows). In addition to this major flood menace there is an annual backwater from smaller rivers that cannot find their natural outlet into the Mississippi when it is at flood stage, and consequently overflow the surrounding lowlands, including some of the richest ground that belongs to Huntington. The soil is good sandy loam, worn out in places from lack of diversification in years past, but rich and dark elsewhere, particularly in the new-ground — land cleared of timber only in the last ten or fifteen years. In all, Huntington Plantation covers over a thousand acres, of which six hundred acres are in a state of cultivation, the other four hundred acres being pasture land and timber.

For two generations the Huntingtons, pioneers in the delta country of Mississippi, have owned this plantation. But the family holdings once included several other plantations even larger than Huntington; and the family lived in a small town, employing managers to supervise the cultivation of the several tracts that made up its holdings. In 1919, however, the wife of the only surviving Huntington, herself farm-bred, grew dissatisfied with the life of the continuously more urban small town in which she lived. The bridge parties and the automobile rides around and around the same block, just becoming features of small-town life in Mississippi, oppressed her. And she urged upon George Huntington the desirability of living on Huntington Place.

George Huntington agreed to his wife's scheme, and the family — George, his wife, and his wife's mother — took up their residence in the log house that had stood upon Huntington Place for fifty years and more. They remodelled the house, installed an electric-light plant, and sunk an Artesian well. Thus they transferred the practical advantages of town life to the country, renouncing the more obvious "advantages" of gossip and bridge-playing and automobile-riding.

Very calmly, without planning or budgeting its expenditure of time, the family arranged its daily routine, which, substantially, has been the routine of farm families in the South for four generations. At five o'clock in the morning India, the Negro cook, came to the house and built a fire in the wood range. A few minutes later George Huntington was up and dressed. Stepping outside the back door of the house, George sounded the large plantation bell (mounted on a wooden frame over which grapevines and roses climbed together) that sent the Negroes to the barn to feed and hitch up their mules. Then George walked to the barn to supervise operations. In the meantime, George's wife and her mother set the table in the dining room, putting fresh flowers in the centre of the table and opening the tall windows to admit the early morning sunlight. By the time George, having seen the Negroes off to the fields, returned to the house, breakfast was ready; and the family sat down to cantaloupe (grown on the place), eggs (brought in from the chicken-house the afternoon before), hot biscuit, preserves (put up by Mrs. Huntington's mother the year before), and coffee (sweetened with milk from the Huntington cows and sugar from Louisiana). The flour for the biscuit, the sugar for the coffee, and the coffee itself constituted the only "store-bought" articles on the table.

After breakfast George Huntington mounted his horse and rode away to supervise the activities of the eighteen Negro families on the plantation, and Mrs. Huntington and her mother set about their morning occupations. First the mother churned, using the crockery-ware churn and wooden dasher that her own mother had used, while Mrs. Huntington went out to work among the flowers that grew about the house and in the flower garden south of the front lawn. Then Mrs. Huntington conferred with the cook about dinner, afterwards going to the pecan orchard across the lane, perhaps accompanied by her mother, to throw bread crumbs to the fish in the large pond created by the overflow from the Artesian well. Just before lunch, Mrs. Huntington would drive to the nearby town to get the mail from the post office and buy the morning paper at the drug store. This newspaper meant a great deal to the Huntingtons; for it, with the mail, constituted their only contact with the outside world except for occasional visits to Memphis or New Orleans and a very rare trip to New York; and the Huntingtons were keenly interested in outside affairs.

By the time Mrs. Huntington returned from the village it would be 11:30, and George would be at the house, ringing the big bell again, this time to notify the Negroes that the two-hour dinner period had begun. The Negroes would drive the mules to the barn (or to their own front yards, shaded by chinaberry trees) and feed them. Then they would sit down to their own tables while George Huntington, having scanned the newspaper headlines and examined the condition of the cotton market, was sitting down at the long table in the dining room of the "big house". There would be vegetables for dinner (from the garden back of the house), perhaps a salad (lettuce and tomatoes from the same garden as the vegetables), meat (killed and preserved on the place) or chicken or birds that George shot in the fields the day before, cornbread (from meal ground on the place, a grist mill being attached to the electric-light plant), and iced tea. The tea and the sugar were bought in town; the rest of the meal, home-grown. For dessert there would be pie, or boiled custard, or home-made ice cream.

After dinner all the Huntingtons would lie down for a short nap. At half-past one George would ring the plantation bell again, and the Negroes, having rested, would go to work while George rode over the place, supervising the afternoon's labours.

The women of the house, in the meantime, sat on the long south veranda and read or sewed. Later, George having returned, the whole family would play croquet on the side lawn, or under the pecan trees across the lane from the house.

After supper, the Huntingtons sat on the side porch and talked, each member of the family telling of minor happenings that varied the routine of the day. Or they would talk of politics, or of natural phenomena. Or perhaps, if the weather was cool, they would play cards. Sometimes they would read aloud, taking turns with the reading; but this was mostly on winter nights before the log fire in the living room with Tip, the rat-terrier, and Harry, the bird-dog, asleep on the hearth rug.

Mrs. Huntington was a pianist; she had studied music at finishing school. And sometimes she would play for the others in the evenings, Schubert or Chopin or Beethoven as a rule, sometimes old Southern songs that would set her mother patting her foot in time to the music as she recalled the square dances of her girlhood.

The family, being early risers, retired about half-past nine every night. And by ten o'clock only the occasional baying of a dog disturbed the katydid-scattered darkness of the plantation.

III

On Huntington, as on all delta plantations, cotton was the money crop; but George Huntington had too little patience with people who live "out of paper sacks and tin cans" to permit the money crop to dominate his land to the exclusion of food crops. Accordingly, the plantation was well diversified under his régime. Large tracts of alfalfa, corn, peas, and lespedeza provided food for the farm animals through the winter months. Sugar cane and sorghum (ground at a toll mill on the plantation) could be made into molasses which the Negroes use not only over biscuit and hot cakes, but also, diluted with water, as a beverage — a beverage that has almost the same popularity that Coca Cola enjoys among the urbanites.

Each Negro family was allotted a strip of ground for gardening purposes and provided with seed by the planter. The more energetic of the Negroes not only used these vegetables for summer consumption but canned quantities of them for winter use. Fruit trees (in addition to the orchard at the "big house") were in evidence at almost every cabin on Huntington; and of course there were the inevitable watermelon patches.

Because of this live-at-home policy, few articles of food had to be "store-bought" on Huntington. The first day of every month, the Negroes quit work and gathered at the plantation "commissary"; there George distributed coffee and flour, lard and fat meat, tobacco and snuff to the tenants, apportioning the supplies in accordance with the number of members in the family. The fat meat was only used to season vegetables; other meats (chicken, birds, pork, and sausage) were available to the Negroes at home for table consumption.

The clothing problem had to be settled in a more modern fashion, for the Negroes had forgotten their ancestors' techniques of weaving. Besides, it was cheaper to buy clothes at the nearby village than to attempt home manufacture. Accordingly, the planter gave orders to the Negroes for clothes whenever they needed them. With these orders the Negroes would drive in wagons to the nearby village and purchase garments (simple clothes for every-day wear, more elaborate costumes for "Sunday-go-to-meeting") which the merchant charged to the plantation account by families. When the planter paid the bill he charged the accounts on his own books, to be deducted from the money due to the Negroes when their cotton was sold in the fall. Some planters, it was well-known, juggled accounts and managed to make a profit from this practice of giving orders for clothes. But George Huntington realized that the Negroes worked hard for their money just as he and his ancestors had worked hard. Then, too, there were for him certain gentlemanly standards that applied to all business relations. He never made a profit on the clothes; the Negro paid only the exact cost of the articles he purchased in the village.

Perhaps I should digress here to explain that there are two classes of tenants on Huntington Place: renters and share-croppers or "half-hands". The renter furnishes his own mules, plows, seed, et cetera, in short, everything necessary to the making of a crop; the planter furnishes land and house. At the end of the year the planter receives one-third of the corn and one-fourth of the cotton as rent on the land; the rest of the crop is the property of the renter. In the case of the share-cropper, the planter furnishes the mules, plows, seed, land, and house; the tenant only furnishes the labour. At the end of the year, tenant and planter each receives half of all crops. In either case the accounts for food, clothing, and medical attention are deducted from the tenant's share of the yield.

In the fall, during the cold spells in November, the hog-killing season arrived. Fat porkers that had been fed the left-overs from the meals during the year were killed, hung on poles in the cold air, cut up into hams and sides and ribs, then salted down for six weeks to await the smoking that would preserve the meat for future use. The fat was trimmed off and made into lard; the other trimmings became sausage, wrapped in shucks or packed into long, narrow cloth bags. "Chitterlings" (certain parts of the entrails particularly beloved of the Negroes) and the "cracklings" that form on top of the lard are eaten immediately, the latter generally in the form of "crackling bread"– cornbread with cracklings cooked in it.

And on winter nights the Negroes hunted, frequently along with the "white folks"; and the baying of hounds split the usually quiet air of the woodland on the plantation. Opossums and 'coons took to the trees in dismay, only to be successfully routed and brought home. Nothing delights the Negro palate more than a fat 'possum surrounded with sweet potatoes that have been baked in hot ashes. The 'coons, in addition to being tasty, were a source of winter income, as the hides were bought in the nearby village for prices that seemed fabulously high to the Negroes.

The same woodlands that provided winter sport and food also provided wood for the fires. Any day wagons could be seen emerging from the woods along roads in which two parallel tracks had been cut deep by the wagons of generations of tenants. All sizes of trees were hauled to the cabins, there to be sawed into logs for the fire. Larger trees (twelve or fourteen inches in diameter) were used as back logs; smaller trees, as the ordinary fuel. In the Southern Negro cabins, a fire still burns all winter, the flaming logs being covered with ashes at night and uncovered in the mornings, still burning.

At the "big house", too, log fires still burned in the twenties, during the Huntington régime. Some of the neighbouring planters had steam heating systems installed in their homes; others burned coal. But the Huntingtons thought there was something cheery about an open wood fire, something homelike for which the added comfort of steam heat did not compensate. So on winter nights, while the Negroes gathered around their own fires in the cabins, the Huntingtons sat before a log fire of their own, reading or playing cards or singing the old songs. Occasionally there would be guests from Memphis, or Jackson, or New Orleans. But these protracted visits were rare occasions now. For the most part, the Huntingtons lived to themselves, concerned only with books and music and the soil, with the mother's tales of the Civil War and with the prospects for the next year's crop and with the welfare of the Negroes under their care. Mrs. Huntington's mother still remembered the slavery days, in which the planters had felt toward the Negroes as though they were children placed in their care to be nursed and tended and coddled; and she had transmitted something of this attitude to her daughter and her son-in-law, so that they took a paternal interest in their tenants. Occasional scoldings were inevitable, of course. But the general attitude was one of affection. And as the Huntingtons sat before their winter fire they were sure that all was well on the place; that everyone had food and clothes and warmth. The fire on the hearth was bright; the roof was strong; the company was pleasant.

IV

For a while — say from 1919 to 1925 — Huntington Plantation prospered under George Huntington's régime. There was enough cotton each year to permit both planter and tenants to make money; and the price, though fluctuating from year to year, was consistently high enough to render complaint unjustified. Moreover, the live-at-home policy prevalent on Huntington made the profit from the money crop almost a clear profit: relatively, the accounts of the tenants and the account of the plantation were minutiæ.

The tenants, finding large balances left to their credit on the plantation books at the end of the year, were enthusiastic about life on Huntington. Their enthusiasm had begun to be evident earlier; George's kindly attitude, his attentiveness toward their needs, his adequate but never exorbitant demands upon their labour – these things had impressed the Negroes. But only money in his hand can make a permanent impression upon the Negro consciousness; other impressions are transitory by comparison. (In this respect, it is interesting to notice, the Negro and the modern business man are brothers.) Thus it was only when, in December, the Negroes entered George Huntington's office one by one to settle their accounts, and emerged, each with a check in his hand, to squat around the hundred-year-old pecan tree in the lane and discuss the new year in the bright December sunshine, that they decided among themselves what they had thought, singly, for some time: No man in the delta was a better boss under whom to work than "Mr. George"; no plantation in the delta was more pleasant as a home than Huntington.

Understand that this picture is not romanticized. I am describing a way of life that existed in the twentieth century, one of which I have been a part; a way of life in which, essentially, the traditions of old Southern planting obtained, a way of life that assured practical economic independence, freedom, leisure, and happiness for eighteen Negro families and a white family.

This was no place of ease and placid loafing – even though these things were enjoyed here in their season. Drought might spoil the corn crop; the boll weevil or the army worm might attack the cotton; overflow might necessitate the replanting of large areas, might even necessitate a flight to higher land for personal safety. But the next year would come; there was money in the bank; there was food in cans on the pantry shelf; chickens were walking around the back yard, and game was scurrying through the woods. Things would, sooner or later, right themselves, thanks to a Deity who, though He might rain punishment on the just and on the unjust alike, was still the shepherd of His faithful flock. There could still be church on Sunday, and singings at night in the cabins, and fish-fries at intervals. There were sure to be presents for everybody at Christmas, and there was wood for a bright fire.

Perhaps this would not constitute happiness to the sophisticated urbanite or the rootless intellectual, who might sneer at the Negro dances or at the somewhat antiquated books the Huntingtons read about their fireside in winter. They might designate the whole thing smug and bourgeois, uncultured and provincial. But it does not follow that the sneers of the urbanites or the howls of the rootless intellectuals against provincialism constitute sufficient condemnation of the way of life that could bring happiness to the less sophisticated. It certainly does not follow, that is, that these sneers and howls constitute sufficient justification for the obliteration of this social structure.

But this argument is probably fruitless, as agrarian life is in no immediate danger from the onslaughts of the sophisticates or the bohemians except as these people lure away from the farms the more brilliant of the young men and women, who have managed, somehow, to develop a yearning for studio couches and synthetic gin, for batiks and Basque sweaters, for berets and freedom of expression (meaning freedom to indulge in typographical gymnastics in a gymnasium decorated with reproductions of Picassos and Klees and Pascins, whose influence upon the intellect apparently has a more salutary effect than family portraits or photographs or flowers under glass bells), for Freudianism and *surréalisme*. The sophisticates and the bohemians exert no detrimental influence upon agrarian life except to seduce these intelligent young people into leaving their homes for the cities and art colonies, and to divorce them from virile art materials, so that they become imitators of e. e. cummings (*sic*) or Gertrude Stein in writing, of Picasso or Miró in painting, of Epstein or Brancusi in sculpture, of Antheil or Greunberg in music, of Man Ray in photography, or of Ezra Pound in teaching. To this extent the urbanites interfere with the production of indigenous regional art, speaking boldly out of a distinctive culture. But the artistically inclined farm population is relatively small, and the dentists, lawyers, doctors, preachers, bankers, mechanics, or engineers lured from the farm are not professionally affected by the *mores* of Montparnasse or Greenwich Village or Woodstock, or wherever the latest art colony may be located.

V

There are, however, two virile and immediate dangers to agrarian life as practised by George Huntington: the dominance in government of industrialism, and the gospel of Progress as exemplified in the activities of many Southerners converted to Progressivism by glimpses of the chimaera of great riches through "efficient" handling of their farms or their business enterprises.

Before we observe the effects of these menaces upon George Huntington and his kind, it may be well to insert a word of explanation. A great many Southern planters are not George Huntingtons: the tendency, since the Civil War, has been to abandon subsistence farming and to use all the land for the raising of cotton for profit. These people import their hay, use tractors and other labour-saving devices to decrease labour requirements, hire managers to supervise their plantations, and buy the food supply for their tenants in cans. They produce a great deal more cotton than George produces; and there are enough of them operating in the South to create an oversupply of raw cotton that tends to decrease annually the price paid for this fiber.

This oversupply, in reality, exists only when one considers the United States as the sole market for raw cotton, for when one considers world economic relations there is no overproduction of cotton fiber. True, the United States consumes only about fifty per cent of the Southern cotton crop each year. But cotton is a world commodity, and the South produces forty per cent of the world cotton supply. For the Southern planter to abandon the production of cotton (as the manufacturer shuts down his plant) until the United States has used up the surplus, would cause a serious shortage in the amount of raw cotton needed for world use. (Figures as of 1929.)

Of course European manufacturers can not pay prices for raw cotton, even when it is scarce, as high as the American prices in time of scarcity of raw material. The cotton planter must, then, face a low price level for the fifty per cent of his crop sold in the United States (since there is, from the American point of view, an oversupply), at the same time he faces a low world price level for the remaining fifty per cent of his annual yield. And the farmer must, all the while, purchase his supplies on an artificially maintained American price level: artificially maintained because the national government persists in a high tariff policy that enables American manufacturers to sell their goods at a price level considerably higher than that of the world at large.

The Southern agriculturist, in brief, still labours under the handicap of enforced submission to an industrialized East which controls national economic policies and which, apparently, is bent upon ignoring him in framing these policies. The consistent refusal of the national government to permit the establishment of a favourable trade balance by debtor nations, and its refusal thereby to aid an upward trend in world markets (perhaps temporarily to the slight detriment of national markets) offers the farmer only one of numerous apodictic proofs of this attitude.

But how does this affect George Huntington and his live-at-home programme? With the consistent decline in cotton prices on the domestic market after 1925, George found himself less and less prosperous. His relatively small production of cotton yielded smaller and smaller balances for the tenants on Huntington Place; and at length he was forced to increase the cotton acreage in order to pay expenses.

Then Progress, the other and more subtle manifestation of industrial domination, entered George's world. A group of business men at the county seat of Nanah-Wahya County insisted that Progress demanded that manufacturing enterprises be persuaded of the desirability of this county, this county seat, as the place in which to locate their plants. Nanah-Wahya County must not lag behind in the Parade of Progress! Accordingly, these business men, mostly merchants and bankers, started a movement for the building of a new county courthouse, to supplant the square greystone structure built in the seventies. An election is necessary to the floating of a bond issue in Mississippi. But the large landholders (necessarily few in numbers because of the extent of their holdings) have little weight against the town men, owners of small stores, clerks, bank employees, mill hands, et cetera, who, paying only a poll tax, and perhaps a privilege licence fee and a small tax on the buildings they own in town, are uninterested in the more elusive financial principles involved in paying for public improvements. By enlisting the support of these townsmen, the business men who sponsored the new courthouse were able to boast that a majority of the citizens of the county approved of the project.

The courthouse was built (at a cost of five hundred thousand dollars), and behind it a modern jail with shower baths and a padded cell and a steel hangman's trap that operates at the pressure of a single finger. Small farmers who still bathed in the kitchen in a large wooden tub on Saturday night, and who had never seen shower baths except as they were pictured in Sears-Roebuck catalogues, marvelled at the new facilities for caring for the criminal element of the county population. But the townsmen showing the countrymen through the jail insisted that the most modern jails had these things. Humanity demanded them. Progress demanded them. And the countrymen, somewhat dubiously, agreed. The next year all land taxes in the county, as was to be expected, showed a large increase.

Soon after the courthouse project was under way, the Progressives began to clamour for concrete roads to supplant the dirt roads over which the farmers had travelled for three generations. If the county was to prosper, they said, it must attract tourists on their annual pilgrimages from north to south with the migratory birds. This plan also sounded attractive to the town boys, and it was voted that the county should float a bond issue to construct paved highways. The national government was to co-operate in this project, paying half of the construction cost; but the county bond issue for road building was a large one, even with this government aid.

A few of the farmers, lured by the talk of easier means of travel in carrying their cotton to the gins, voted for this bond issue too; and it carried by a large majority. The Progressives had neglected to mention that the road would only go through one portion of the county, with as few curves as possible, and that the farmers who paid for the highway would still be forced to use the old roads until they reached the highway itself for the last few miles of the trip to town. The Progressives also neglected to mention the fact that the heavy motor traffic would make travel by wagon on the new highway only a little less dangerous than travel in France in 1915.

George Huntington opposed the new roads. And when he was informed that the right-of-way for the new straight highway would cut through the middle of his plantation, he was even more disturbed. But he could either sell the land to the county or have it condemned and seized. And, being sensible, George took the first alternative. The road machines came in, and soon there was an embankment eighteen feet wide running through the center of Huntington. There was some delay about the paving, however; and when the time came to put down the concrete, officials decided that the new road through Huntington was not exactly where it should be. They could eliminate a curve by changing the road; they demanded a new right-of-way, this time through the fertile land near the woods at the back of the plantation, and once more George Huntington was forced to sell. The road was finally completed. And land taxes in Nanah-Wahya County rose still higher.

About this time the drainage-canal craze spread through the Mississippi Delta counties. Someone had the theory that huge canals, connecting with the tributaries of the Mississippi, would drain the land speedily in spring and lessen the backwater menace. Other counties were digging the ditches with furious energy. And Nanah-Wahya County also adopted the idea. Once more machines were brought to Huntington, now to cut a gash through the place and leave huge piles of dirt on either side of the gash. Huntington had a drainage system by which the water from the place went into a small creek nearby. But after the drainage canal was cut, George had to revise his drainage system so as to utilize the new outlet. Negroes tunnelled through the piles of dirt left on the sides of the canal, and George's new drainage system was completed by the spring following the completion of the big ditch. George had already paid his taxes for that year, not failing to notice another perceptible increase attributed by the tax statement to "drainage".

But the drainage canals, contrary to expectations, facilitated the encroachments of the backwater. The tributaries of the Mississippi, unable to find their usual outlet into the swollen "Father of Waters", hastened to back up into the drainage canals. Thence, by means of the new private drainage system, the water spread slowly over the entire surface of Huntington Plantation. Other plantations fared somewhat better, but they were the exceptions. The Progressives explained, if cornered, that this situation was beyond their remedy; the trouble lay with the Federal government's flood-control plan for the Mississippi! George changed back to the old drainage system and leveed the canal on his place as well as he could, so that the next year slightly less backwater entered his land. But the taxes for canal building still had to be paid every year.

Still facing low prices brought on by "overproduction", and confronted with the added menace of constantly increasing taxation brought on by Progressive measures in county government, George was forced between the years 1925 and 1932 to abandon annually more and more land previously devoted to subsistence crops and use that land for his money crop. Thus the oversupply of cotton for the United States became annually greater, and cotton prices went even lower.

As George deserted subsistence farming, his wants increased; and in order to produce his crop he had to buy still more articles (from manufacturers protected by tariff from European competition) at the American price level. The large sums of money needed to produce a crop under this system forced George to borrow heavily at his local bank, mortgaging his land.

The added debt bred still more desertion of subsistence farming, still larger cotton crops, still lower prices, still larger debts, *de novo ad infinitum*.

George Huntington, understand, did not want to adopt this plan of farming. He wanted to live at home, producing on his farm almost everything needed to maintain his standard of living and his tenants' standard of living. This agrarian programme was slowly, but inevitably, submerged by external forces necessitating increased production of the money crop. And all these external forces are results of industrial domination in government, it is obvious.

The tenants on Huntington Place, having ceased to make a profit on their year's labours, began to move away to the towns and cities. Besides, in an effort to cut expenses, George had purchased a tractor. Now he keeps very few mules; and only half as many families of tenants live on Huntington. George has been forced to adopt industrial methods in order to attempt a feeble combat with industrialism; and he has been forced to aggravate an already disturbing unemployment problem.

George was still living on Huntington Place when I last heard from him. But as he sits by the fire on winter evenings, talking with his wife and his wife's mother, he is worried. The place is no longer as silent as it once was: the motors passing on the concrete highway with a sound like tearing silk disturb the usual plantation quiet. And some of the tenants have managed to buy battery radio sets over which they listen to Northern orchestras with the sets turned to full volume: the sound penetrates the Huntington living room quite disconcertingly. George does not know whether he will be able to pay the mortgage on the plantation next year; he does not know whether he can borrow any more money to make the crop and to pay taxes. If the mortgage is not paid, the bank will foreclose; if the taxes are not paid, the state will sell the land: and George knows that the loss of his land means ruin, the definite abolition of any possibility of the resumption of the way of life he loves.

Yes, George Huntington is worried. And he is puzzled, too, and a bit disgruntled, at a scheme of things in which, apparently, the urbanites do all the planning and the farmers do the paying; at a government in which, apparently, only the industrialists are considered economically important.

This dominance in government of industrialism is not a new danger, as George well knows. It is the menace that threatened Southern planters before the Civil War; the menace that Calhoun and Jefferson Davis and others fought within the Union as long as they could; the menace that, efforts within the Union failing, drove the South to secession and civil war.* And this Alastor possesses today the new vigour gained in that war: it has justified its "rights" by conquest. In one of its manifestations it is a high protective tariff that ignores Southern interests; in another manifestation it consists of numerous minor movements advancing together under a banner inscribed with the one ubiquitous catchword: "Progress". But, whatever its guise, it is still potent, and it still constitutes a sword of Damocles to the survival of agrarianism in the Southern United States.

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* *Cf.* Frank Lawrence Owsley's "The Irrepressible Conflict", *I'll Take My Stand*, p. 61.

John Taylor and the Political Economy of Agriculture

Part II

ANDREW NELSON LYTLE

NO FARM'S well-being can be assured by an efficient internal economy alone. The farm's internal economy and its external relations to society are the two poles of a very special world. This fact, so obvious to an agrarian, bears restatement, since it has fallen out of common knowledge even among the agricultural states of the Union. The farm as a cultural unit – and again it is necessary to be explicit: the land, the people who live on it, its peculiar history, its myth, all that goes to make it a living organism (today a farm's definition is generally limited to a statistical appraisal of its fluctuating cash value) – the farm, to resume, is either the physical and spiritual support of our state or the creature of an irresponsible oligarchy which in its reach for power has destroyed those special qualities that give a state strength and life. This analysis is the root of Taylor's political economy.

In the early stages of the American Union it was of supreme importance that the state governments should fall into the hands of men who would watch after agriculture with jealous care. This was of more immediate importance then than now, for the colonies so suddenly metamorphosed into states had a population chiefly agricultural or related directly to the land. And since a government's attitude towards the land, especially in our temperate zone, is the key to a nation's private and public life, the wrong attitude could easily make abortive the winning of political independence.

There had been general discontent in both worlds with the loss of feudal independence in Europe. The greater body of those who emigrated to this continent were motivated by this discontent; but unfortunately there was no real escape, principally because those who fled were confused as to the causes of their distress. They realized they were living badly and that their surroundings were not what an Englishman had a right to expect; but as is always the case, it was difficult to find why this was so. Life in the new world was used as a lure to send the disaffected into other countries as the servants of the masters of Europe, just as a yeoman will turn stock into fresh pastures after one pasture has been eaten dry. When the same pressure was felt in the new world, an accident brought about a political severance and the possibility for changed conditions.

These changed conditions were expressed in the terms of liberty and independence and freedom. The amount of freedom to be expected in this world is extremely limited. About this there is little to be done, just as there is little to be done about the time and place of birth, marriage, or death. But it was the American's assumption that the individual acting with other individuals can predetermine the form of a common set of limitations. The important consideration for those who pretend to better their condition is that they take care to define the exact nature of their limitations. Two sets of opinions, among many, showed themselves in the new political field to be the dominant rivals. Under the outward calm of Washington's administration these antagonistic opinions gradually shifted into party organizations. As will be seen, neither party was pure; but the most active elements in both have a definable political activity and historical meaning. One party wanted to continue the same exploitative rule which had usurped the power of the monarchies of Europe. Those of this opinion were miscalled monarchists at first; and later Federalists, another misnomer. In Europe such a group of interests had usurped the credit power from a monarchy shaken in its principles, and, letting the monarchs take the blame for the conditions thus brought about, consolidated their power under an irresponsible financial system disclaiming responsibility to any control on the earth or in Heaven. In England this power had rendered the people tractable by removing them from the land where their self-dependence had in the past saved them from slavery, bringing them into large cities where they must depend upon another's bread and another's tools. And even those who continued at farming found conditions so changed, due to the inclosure of the commons and the dishonourable surrender of the nobility, that their plight was little better.

In opposition to the Federalists the Republicans under Jefferson espoused liberty of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of conscience, as little government as possible, no entailment of land, no foreign wars, and a state where most of the population owned land. This was Jefferson's answer to the evil practices of the recent past. As publicist and strategist for the party John Taylor rested his defense finally upon this liberalism which he had caught in his youth as one might catch the pox. If this were all that might be claimed for him, there would be little reason to disturb his dusty bones. But he has much greater title to distinction in the quality of a strategy which, if the tacticians had but known how to construe it, might have changed the course of American history. All the noble abstractions that drifted like miasmal vapours through the political atmosphere, where so many lost their way groping with outstretched hands and had their pockets picked, failed to dim his sharp eyes or throw him off his path. He was like a swordsman whose skill had laid his enemies low only to find, when he turned, that his back had not been against his bridge and keep as he had thought but before a precipice, in front of which he has been carrying on a masterful but useless fight, separate from his companions-in-arms who had allowed the bridge to be carried. The dead that lay about him only mocked his skill, when the noise of the enemy breaking open the chests in the donjon struck his ears.

Taylor's predicament was common to most of the early Republicans: conservative instincts and desires coupled with liberal intellectual principles. Because of the conservatism natural to all land-living people, at the close of the Revolutionary War there was a better chance for the survival of the European tradition on the American continent than in England. This was so, in spite of the many decades of exploitation by Crown, Crown companies, and Scotch merchants who had only been able to eat away a small rim of top-soil near the coast. But that view imbued with the philosophy of materialism, which had undone England, quickly manifested itself in its destruction of the Confederation which had prosecuted the war. The Confederation promised care for tradition by allowing no vicious interference from the outside with the forms of the American commonwealths. Hamilton, the leading disciple of materialism, made plans for a strong central government. He acted with consummate tactical skill. The instructions to the delegates who were to consider revision of the existing Confederation, and no more, were explicit: they were to make a more perfect union. What went on behind the closed doors in Philadelphia has been revealed only in the most fragmentary detail, but it is clear that three schools of opinion struggled for supremacy: the monarchist headed by Hamilton; the nationalist; and a third gathering about those who insisted on following the states' instructions. The monarchists, according to Taylor, failed and threw in their strength with the nationalists; compromised with the third party; and the Constitution was the result. This is known as the Revolution of 1789.

It is common history how difficult it was to get the states to agree to this revolution. Taylor opposed Virginia's ratification. He understood that the new Union was a move towards consolidation; at best it was a postponement of the struggle with every odd in favour of the monarchist-nationalists. A real monarchy might have been the best form of Union – consider the peace it brought to Austria-Hungary after 1848 – but the monarchy proposed by Hamilton was no real monarchy. It was to have had upon its throne a king who would rule for special interests, one of those capitalists' kings relatively new to the world. A national republic would for all practical purposes serve the same ends, as Hamilton was shrewd enough to realize, except that instead of one man, the Congress, a more numerous body, would have to be subjected. The American conservatives failed to realize that the English kings had lost their power, and at George's door were laid their troubles; while he, in turn, was set at odds with his rebellious American subjects when they were only rebelling against a Parliament of Whig nobles and merchants who would, through the king's person, end the struggle between monarch and representatives of the money power. After George no English king would forget his place. Perhaps the reason for this misinterpretation may be found in the landed gentleman's inherited jealousy of the king's power and property.

At any rate the compromise to which the Confederation group finally agreed is the basis of the great experiment in "free government". A free government should have been recognized by these logicians for what it was, a contradiction in terms. It may seem pedantic to insist upon it, but the loose use of certain words by the early fathers made their position needlessly difficult. The new Constitution authorized a very complicated form of government. The states, the sovereigns to the contract, delegated certain powers to a central government, notably those powers which would be necessary for protection against foreign dangers. Their internal life was to be directed by their varied polities. This, it seems, is the essence of the early American principles of government. The arrangement was to be perpetual . . .

a negative government with a division of powers among the separate departments, with the Constitution a sort of holding company telling the rules which would prevent various spheres from encroaching on one another.

Assuming that all government is an evil, the Republicans sought to preserve this system of checks, believing that the continuous friction and jealousy among the varied spheres would lessen the opportunity for tyranny. Their experience had taught them that government, especially strong government, means exploitation. In the Federal sphere the divisions – the Executive, the Congress, and the Judiciary – had powers not only of a certain kind but powers which were weakened by further subdivision. It is not the purpose here to go into a Constitutional discussion, but to emphasize the great stress which the framers, following Republican interpretation, laid upon a negative form of government; the evidence of their concern for the wide ownership of and non-interference with private property, upon which they grounded their stand for order in a world falling into chaos.

Just how desperate this stand was may be observed by any student of our subsequent history, for the Confederation had been supplanted by a union which might become anything. A confederation is formed between sovereign bodies. Its powers are temporary, and they relate strictly to foreign affairs. Its duties are carried out by ambassadors. But this new union had raised up a form of central government which would *permanently* decide on foreign policies as well as on certain relations between the participating states. The states had now signed away important functions of sovereignty to it, and *forever*; and no matter how much the strict constructionists might declare that it could perform certain acts, clearly nominated, its recognition as a fixed part of the government with a heart, a mind, and a liver, gave it a mechanism by which it might usurp complete sovereignty. The rub lay in the nature of foreign affairs which, by the crises arising out of world conditions, are able to subvert the best constitutions and reduce the ordering of the internal affairs of a union to the support of a foreign policy which may bring distress, suffering, and revolution. It was not long before New England was asked, on account of foreign policy, to acquiesce patriotically to laws dealing injuries and ruin.

It was clear from the start how dangerous were the powers assigned to the Federal sphere of influence, for obviously no tyranny lurked among the rights withheld by the states. The direction of internal affairs could injure very little, even when this direction was at its worst, other member states. A state might nullify certain actions which threatened to do it harm, but the advantages of the union were so obvious that it would hesitate to do this unless injustice was marked. In the two historic instances of threatened nullification, the Hartford Convention and South Carolina, the final results might well have been to strengthen the Union and add to the general prosperity if each had acted upon its threat. Both arose from severe grievances, and the cure, pursued in the name of a central policy, was worse than the disease. What were a few sailors worth, or what the loss of a part of the shipping, against the ruin of the whole? And what has the ultimate gain been to ruin the South, that last conservative balance to a Union which had lost its course? Practice found the central department acting very positively and beyond its power under Jefferson as well as Adams, not from a despotic purpose but where its foreign policy pushed it. The Louisiana Purchase is a striking case, though not as important as the embargoes and the War of 1812.

It was this state of affairs which brought the Quids together: Taylor, the political theorist; Randolph and Macon, parliamentarians. They offered opposition within the party itself; they were the pure Republicans, the strict constructionists; and it is tragic that they were unable to discipline Jefferson. Of these purists and their allies, Taylor principally concerns us here. His weight was felt in Congress, but his personality did not seize like Randolph's, whose brilliant and destructive and slightly mad mind terrorized so many mediocrities. But Taylor's principles and his analysis of the evil forces working like false yeast in the wine of American life became the complete guides for future conservative action. Those who came after added little to his original argument. The later additions, with one marked exception, were confined to new tactics. They all owe, directly or indirectly, their position and arguments to him. His influence on the mature Calhoun is clear. This does not detract from Calhoun's greatness; indeed he is the greater man. He does not so much derive from as fulfil Taylor. Calhoun's dialectic was the expression of a culture just becoming conscious of its fateful rôle. Taylor was the political prophet who ignored the Wilderness; Calhoun the Messiah who should not have had to consider it.

Taylor's chief contribution may be found in his several books on the unsatisfactory state of political affairs; that is to say, on the state of affairs, for life was pretty much regarded at this time through a political eye. He turned to this writing and to a behind-the-scenes activity when he recognized the futility of openly opposing Jefferson. He became what Dodd calls the Peacemaker of the Virginia Dynasty, and the olive branch in his hands turned into the executive crown on Monroe's head. Monroe was the hope of the Quids. But Taylor never placed too much faith in one individual. He relied more on showing what blessings the proper construction of the Constitution would bring to the people of the Union and, above all, the dangers which threatened it.

In 1814 he published his *Enquiry*,* and this was to be followed by other books, amplifying his thesis or exposing the changing positions of the enemy. The *Enquiry* was ostensibly an answer to John Adams's interpretation; but he used Adams and the Federalists as convenient blinds for his real purpose, the preservation of the balances and the exposure of those evil moral agents which would upset them. And though the Constitution had given rules for keeping the balances, the government of the United States, morally considered, was both good and bad. The happiness of the Union depended upon the predominance of a good morality. Adams argued for a balance between different orders and the necessity for an aristocracy. Taylor replies, in effect, that Adams is dealing in anachronisms. There can be no danger from fixed orders in society, for they no longer exist; or where they do exist, they no longer have any meaning and consequently no power. But by setting them up and discussing their relative merits and demerits as if conduct were actually influenced by them, the real destructive forces were enabled to work without opposition. This evil moral force he called the Aristocracy of Paper and Patronage. It hoped to subvert the Constitution and thereby gain the property of the Union by destroying the liberties of its people.

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* The full title is *An Enquiry into the Principles and Policy of the United States Government.*

Taylor's chief claim to resurrection rests just here. In spite of the contradictions which Republican liberalism subjected him to, he detected and never lost sight of this inherited materialistic philosophy as the central force which threatened a miscarriage of the independence won from England. As faithfully, he laid bare the weak defences where it might enter in and establish itself. Taylor fears the growth of the executive because of the excessive power given him, his secret treaties through which he may involve the country in war and further entrench himself in power. This same power appoints the judges who will be dependent upon it. Judicial power relates to municipal, not to political law. Its functions have to do with individuals, not nations. When it allies itself to an individual or to a party it may usurp for that individual or for that party. Judges can only be impeached. Taylor believes they should be removed for incompetency as well. Their proper responsibility is to the sovereignty, not to one branch of government. The executive may also corrupt the legislative branch by offering patronage. In moments of crisis the executive power overbalances everything else; therefore

Taylor is suspicious of a large standing army. He relies on an effective militia which the President may use in times of common danger, and which the individual state may rely upon for its own protection when its sovereignty is threatened. It was for this reason that the Constitution provides against executive invasion of a state. The state in trouble calls upon the militia of the rest of the Union – not the executive at Washington. Both Andrew Jackson's threat and Lincoln's invasion therefore were revolutionary. Through such perversions can come the evils which corrupt men into usurping power and stealing the liberties of sovereign bodies, to be guaranteed by division of power, responsibility, and legislative purity.

This Paper-and-Patronage Aristocracy was already well entrenched by the time Taylor's books appeared as political warnings. He takes up in order of time the various interests composing this aristocracy as they manoeuvre for position. Funding and banking are the most dangerous interests to receive the legislative patronage. The funding of a depreciated continental currency and the assumption of the state debts by the central government created the means by which a banking interest came into being. (Jefferson's administration inherited an eighty-million-dollar debt.) The funding of the currency put into the hands of a small group of speculators the paper by which so much property would be automatically transferred from the hands of the producers and the taxed into the hands of the unproductive and taxing interests. That is, a branch of the government deliberately misappropriated collective property. As one evil begets another, funding, a temporary confiscation, established banking, a permanent instrument by which the common wealth would be transferred to a special group. "Our mistake", he writes, "in estimating titled nobility and paper stock is exactly that of the mouse, terrified with the cock and charmed with the cat", for into the hands of such an irresponsible business house the government turned over the public credit. The moment this was done the sovereign bodies lost their most precious safeguard, and their governments abdicated in fact if not in title. The people's trustee had given away the most important function delegated to it, for whoever controls the public credit controls the Union; just as, to quote Taylor again, he who receives the income from property is its actual owner. His comment upon the specious reasoning of this aristocracy that the increase of its wealth was an indication of a general increase is: "Genuine public credit is enthroned not upon gold gathered by law into a bank, but upon property distributed by industry." This is true, but it is a half-truth, and as a half-truth it failed to redress the grievance. Law is the means by which any rulers enforce their rule. There will always be rulers; even Taylor's representatives and not the people themselves were the actual rulers. The problem of government is how to get responsible rulers who, at the same time, for the perils and labours of their functions do not charge the ruled too dearly; who will rule, be well rewarded, but will not deprive the subject of too great a share of the fruits of labour. To say the people rule themselves is to beg the question. Taylor speaks of the distribution of property by industry, not law. Industry does not distribute (at least not in his sense); it produces. A good law reserves to the industrious the product of industry; a bad one takes it away.

Following up this strain of reasoning, he defines money: it has a double nature; it is both good and evil. Its good moral quality derives from its usefulness in exchanging the produce of the world. Its evil nature arises from its facilitation of this illegitimate transfer which he has defined as the real danger. It is the government's duty to protect the public credit by sustaining the good moral quality of money and reducing its evil nature to the minimum. He asks, if the people must be taxed by paper, why does the government itself not use paper to pay its expenses rather than turn it over, gratis, to a vicious, anti-social economic influence? It would then have, as excuse for being, the performance of a necessary act.

The Aristocracy of Paper and Patronage, having captured the public credit, was ready to begin the conquest of a continent. There were many obstacles in the way, the resources to be reduced were vast and the population which would serve their purposes was as yet small. But this aristocracy had gained the first advantage, and it was well organized. It moved at first openly and directly towards its object: the corruption of legislatures, one of Taylor's evil principles. The Yazoo Frauds consigned lands equal in area to Alabama and Mississippi to land companies who bought up the entire Georgia legislature, barring one man. But this created so much opposition that the Paper Aristocracy was driven to another method. It was not long in discovering its cue – it must move by indirection.

(*To be concluded*)

REVIEWS

Educationists in Confusion*

THAT this book has long been needed, as the publisher avers, is suggested by the fact that it has quickly gone into a second printing. In the choice language of the author, this desideratum of professional education may be described as an effortful scrutiny of the strange novel events of American education, such as ongoing activities of traineés (accent *sic*), and of the civilizational forces, such as belongingness, which mayhap make meaningfully for immersion into the budding native culture, thus dealing with the whole setup involved in the question what ought education accomplish.

Having scant respect for the old cultural values, including the traditions of English prose, the author lightheartedly invites all moulders of the American mind to ally themselves with organized labour to bring about a revolution that shall assure economic security, social happiness, and new cultural values. The guiding spirit in this movement should be John Dewey, who has unquestionably been the strongest philosophical influence upon those educationists who have stopped to think, and the leading institution should presumably continue to be that which the author serves, Columbia University, the home of Teachers College. Approximately half of the educationists of this book are Columbia teachers, and probably well over half received training there. They are classified into three groups: those stressing the values of Christianity and Capitalism, those stressing the Ultimacy of Science, and those stressing Experimental Naturalism. Mr. Woelfel rejects the first two groups, and finds Dr. Dewey the only quite respectable member of the third group. The views of each educationist are presented without direct quotation and in such summary fashion that one can never be sure of the meaning. After all seventeen have been dealt with, they are dealt with a second time critically — a method involving much repetition and confusion. Unhappy in organization, the book is still unhappier in tone. Not content with criticizing ideas, Mr. Woelfel has the revolutionist's uncanny interest in motives. We are told that Bobbitt, for example, leaves the Progressives strictly alone, "perhaps regretting that so many of his own ideas are also expressed by them". It would seem that the old values of gentlemanly debate do not comport well with the new values of revolutionary ardour.

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* MOLDERS OF THE AMERICAN MIND: A Critical Review of the Social Attitudes of Seventeen Leaders in American Education *by Norman Woelfel* (COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS. 304 pp. $3.00).

What will make this book significant to the lay reader is not, however, Mr. Woelfel and his views but rather the revelation of fundamental confusion among our leading educationists. Despite the prodigious amount of work done in the field of professional education in the past thirty years, virtually all of the "outmoded" beliefs and practices still have (or again have) the support of some of the seventeen leaders. The experts themselves find grave shortcomings in current conceptions of transfer, individual differences, intelligence tests, measurement of all sorts, discipline, subjects, grades, the project method, Progressive Schools, concentration upon method, concentration upon efficiency, vocational education, large classes, activity analysis, objectivity and pseudo-objectivity, indoctrination, the value of scholarship, the ultimacy of science or of philosophy, the place of self-control and restraint, the scope and rate of change in civilization, the present trustworthiness of the basic sciences (psychology and sociology), the future prospects of the basic sciences, the very possibility of education. The curious reader may inspect for himself the perplexities of the educationists by turning to pages 30, 45, 46, 57, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 69, 78, 79, 80, 85, 87, 91, 92, 93, 97, 101, 106, 109, 111, 115, 116, 117, 118, 121, 122, 123, 125, 127, 130, 131, 132, 137, 146, 150, 152, 153, 167, 181, 193, 218. This by no means exhausts the possibilities.

It is small wonder that we read: "Confusion in both theory and practice prevails today throughout the educational system"; "Confusion reigns supreme at the very heart of public education"; "The influence wielded by that modern American phenomenon, the professor of education" has been "in adding confusion and faddism"; "The education of educators is so over-balanced on the technical side that educators as a class are, to a tragic extent, uncultured and ignorant in matters about which they should be capably informed"; "The profession as a whole is outside the real social situation and leans dangerously towards moral and spiritual bankruptcy"; "Educational leaders today are as much confused as anyone else."

After this, the graduates of teachers' colleges and all teachers without benefit of Education may breathe a little more freely. The weight of authority, of dogmatism deliberate or unconscious, of pseudo-science and misapplied science, is lifted. The common arrogance of educationists is seen to be unworthy. If John Dewey himself confesses that educational leaders today are as much confused as anyone else, why then, it would seem, anyone else is free to do some thinking on his own account. And the first really valuable thought that anyone will have is, I dare say, a thought that I find in Mr. Woelfel himself. "The issues are not yet drawn."

NORMAN FOERSTER

Shelley With "Guts"*

EACH town, each city numbers in its midst groups of young men who frequent its street corners, who saunter along its sidewalks with an anthropoidal lurch in exaggeration of their masculinity. Their content, their pleasure, their sense of "guts" (a word repeatedly encountered within the pages of Mr. Engle's book) partly derives from reacting only to the stimuli of their immediate surroundings: they are without that philosophic bent which may lose itself in an absorbing *Weltschmerz*, though its immediate environment, its personal comfort, be assured.

American Song, one of the most irritating, interesting books of poems recently published, is blindly, illogically affirmative throughout the major portion of some twenty-nine poems. The prologue, a poem six pages long, states the general attitude of the book. We will, writes Mr. Engle,

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* AMERICAN SONG *by Paul Engle* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. 102 pp. $1.75).

. . . like our fathers turn
Again our backs on the sunrise end of earth. . . .

and

Raise the highest building in the world
To sanctify a gamble, not a god. . . .

We must go on and on

And down into the dared and dreamed of valley.

We must forget the culture and beauty resident in countries not our own; we must give over seeing the world a waste land; and, though we have, other than courage – the means – no definite goal, though we are ignorant of what "the dared and dreamed of valley" may be, we must forget, put by a large view of life, must revel in momentary joys, the earth, the

White magnificence of a human face.

In short, we must adopt simplicity, the state of mind indigenous to the young men on street corners (as the most glaring examples), and content ourselves with nature and our country's primitive impressiveness.

Youth is, notoriously, cruel. Mr. Engle, in his vigour and obvious kinaesthesia, native to healthy youth, would have us follow where his keen sensibilities made rapturous with the sheer wonder of life, where his physiological imperatives, rather incoherently, lead. To elaborate and apply his views would be to picture man ravished with the beauty of a rose while, at his feet, a Rome burns to ashes. When the lyric poet adopts a cause he is, like Shelley, whom Mr. Engle's locutions call to mind, prone to be indefinite, to offer as a universal scheme magnification of the lyric moment. Given Whitman's general message, with Shelley's locutions, one has an idea of Mr. Engle's work. Such poems as those entitled "Harlem Airshaft" recall Mr. Eliot's "Preludes".

In "Letter to an Elder Generation" Mr. Engle addresses the older poets, who saw the world, life, too clearly to take only joy of it. Some men would believe in something, perhaps a God, and are enveloped by an opposing *Zeitgeist*: without belief some men are lost. Mr. Engle tells us

> *There is a primitive old strength of heart*
> *Men have called courage and that we call guts.*

But the poet is essentially, in his poetry, a person, if his work be quite subjective, with few reticences. The difficulties requiring the "guts" are what this "elder generation" have written of, lamented. "Guts" is, at best, but the means; the end remains uncertain. Yes, let us go on and on, but to some goal.

Technically, Mr. Engle's poetry promises more than it achieves. When he uses rhyme it is apt to be both painfully obvious and frayed. He employs, in his blank verse, an interestingly complicated sentence structure – the while singing simplicity. A few of his metaphors are felicitous; some parallel Shelley's resounding, rhetorical indefinites. The following figures of speech are chosen at random from Mr. Engle's work and from Shelley's: "Imagination's mighty sledge"; "common doorway of the world"; "vague hills of his life"; "long pendulum of life"; "living wood of his body"; "thorns of life"; "heavy weight of hours"; "chains of its dismay"; "rapid plumes of song"; "ocean of the world"; "caves of divine sleep"; "dreary cone of our life's shade". There are too many pompous, ill-digested fusions of idea and thing.

With the "New Deal" and its attendant stressed nationalism amongst us, *American Song* is most opportune. Mr. Engle would have us satisfied with sight and sound and speech and touch, nor question anything. There are, however, many who must question, for whom the sheer wonder of living is not enough, and these, the men with a philosophic bent, might well apply these words of Matthew Arnold to the bulk of Mr. Engle's production:

Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore. . . .

HOWARD BLAKE

The Meaning of Conscience*

CIVILIZATION, says the author in his preface, lies somewhere beyond conscience. That phrase has a suggestively Hegelian ring. Viewed in its most comprehensive aspect, Hegel's "objective mind" is civilization. It is a complex of folklore and tradition, custom and law, habits of thought and standards of action, all our accumulated heritage of knowledge and behaviour. It is the pattern by which we live. Our author, who is professor of philosophy in the University of Chicago, takes that pattern and seeks to disentangle from it the strands of conscience. His purpose is to examine the nature of conscience and to facilitate our understanding of its rôle in civilization.

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* BEYOND CONSCIENCE *by T. V. Smith* (MCGRAW-HILL. 373 pp. $3.00).

To this end, he makes an analysis of conscience along two lines of inquiry. First, he examines what he calls its morphology and its orientation in human life. Secondly, he discusses a number of angles from which the philosophers have been wont to approach the problem of its validity. To the latter avenue of investigation he devotes by far the greater part of his book. Thus the work becomes an essay in the history of moral ideas, ranging from the theological implementation of the ethics of the Greeks to the dialectic behaviourism of Lenin and his disciples. From the critical angle the book might be more aptly described as a study of the metaphysical presuppositions of ethics.

Although our author nowhere gives us a formal definition of conscience, he offers us abundant descriptions of it. He describes it as the form consciousness takes when crucial action impends. This relation to action he takes to be its distinguishing feature. Where knowing becomes doing, he says, there is the threshold of conscience. Conscience therefore is energization, a push-to-power. It becomes a persistent series of human drives, which eventually form what he calls an integrated sector of personality. To this integrated sector of personality, ever trying to extend itself over the entire self and then over the world which stands more or less opposed to consciousness, Dr. Smith gives the classical name of conscience.

But this push-to-power of the modern champions of monism is not the *conscientia* of the classical tradition in philosophy, and no mere use of the scholastic coinage will make it so. For the scholastics, conscience is nothing else but an act of reason. It is not a special faculty of the mind. It is not a quality of the soul, not an outgrowth of the consciousness. It is not even what is popularly called the voice of God. It is merely the act which is elicited when a man uses his reason on moral matters, the act by which he judges whether one or other of two moral alternatives is good or bad. Further, it is an act of the practical reason, dealing with practical questions, an act of the same practical reason by virtue of which a man discusses within himself the difficulties of his household or the problems of his business. Conscience is therefore a rational act by which the ethical value of a particular action is judged.

A judgement, however, postulates a standard according to which the verdict is issued. Aristotle based that standard on man's nature, as established objectively by his capacities, his possible activities, with the intellect as the highest activity. In the Aristotelian teaching there is an innate drive of man towards final well-being (*eudaimonia*). This well-being is an unconditional good, desirable for its own sake and preferable to any other. It consists in the fulfilment of the work or function for which man exists, and the nature of that function can be determined only by considering the human soul. In other words, the nature of man is the very essence of the standard which Aristotle sets up as the ethical norm. Aristotle describes the ideal life as *theoria*, a life spent in the unimpeded apprehension and discovery of truth. He further reminds us that it is an ideal unattainable in the present life.

Aquinas, in his quest for the master value, follows the teleological path marked out by Aristotle but goes much farther than the Stagirite. He conceives more clearly the universal good, the ultimate reality. He reasons his way to the existence of God as man's final end, and he holds that, unless there is such a final end, the lives of human beings would be without meaning or value.

In the thought of Aquinas, moral obligation is an ethical necessity arising, not out of man's nature as such, but out of man's nature as reflecting the *lex aeterna* or providential plan in the divine mind, which makes God, the ultimate reality, the end of every creature. The natural law of man (*lex naturalis*) is an echo of this eternal law, a participation in the *lex aeterna* applied to a rational creature and made known to him by reason. We know this law by that quality of the mind which Aquinas calls *synteresis*, an intellectual quality by which the mind comes easily and quickly to know the first principles of morality. We apply the law to particular cases by the use of our intellect. The act of applying the law is called conscience. It is the intellectual prelude by which the law within us gives rise to a concrete act of the will.

Our author does not even refer to this classical line of argumentation. In the whole length of his chapter on the theological implementation of the validity of conscience he discusses neither the teaching of Aristotle nor that of Aquinas. The latter philosopher is not even named in the chapter. Instead of discussing any of the five great Thomist arguments for the existence of God, Dr. Smith throws the whole emphasis of his criticism on an analysis of

Anselm's ontological argument. He presents the teaching of scholasticism in this fashion:

> Fortified by the drive of an ancient and persisting prejudice, immunized from the nagging queries of empirical investigation, and strengthened by an application limited to a single idea—the idea of God—the ontological principle was fitted out by St. Anselm for a prosperous voyage of another thousand years or so, if not indeed for an immortal life.

Now, the historical fact is that this "prosperous voyage of a thousand years" was not sailed on scholastic seas. Put forward in its present form by Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) the ontological argument was immediately challenged by Anselm's own contemporaries. Aquinas (1225-1109) definitely rejected it. Six centuries after Anselm's day, when the wealth of scholasticism had fallen into feeble hands and when its enemies were beginning to dominate the scene, it was given a new lease of life by Descartes (1596-1650). Kant assailed it strenuously, but it found a new champion in Hegel (1770-1831) who said of it that it is the one true proof of God's existence.

There was far too much Platonism in it for it to be accepted universally by the scholastics. Aquinas attacked it on the principle that man has no intuition of the existence of God. In the Thomist teaching all our knowledge begins in sensible experience. From such beings as we know, from the givens of sense as apprehended by the intellect, we come to an acknowledgement of the divine Being. Thus, the five arguments of Aquinas for the existence of God are, each and every one, based on an empirical principle. His whole outlook was so conditioned by a respect for objective reality that he could not accept the a-priorism of the Anselmic view. It was not the scholastics who bequeathed the ontological argument to modern thinkers. The testators were Descartes and Hegel. Those two philosophers, with the casual assistance of Spinoza and Leibnitz, gave to the famous argument its modern vogue.

After an examination of various implementations of the validity of conscience, implementations theological, idealistic, socio-psychological, metaphysical, logical, and aesthetic, Dr. Smith rejects them all. Nowhere is he able to find an acceptable validation of the dictates of conscience. Yet, despite all his patient analysis, he is forced to leave conscience in possession of the field. In the end, he contents himself by recommending to human understanding, as a desirable alternative for the push-to-power, what he calls "the intrinsic appeal of conscience as dynamic essence".

Brilliantly as this book is written, and saturated though it be with a working knowledge of certain modern phases of the history of moral ideas, it seems to suffer from two radical defects. The first of these defects is its almost complete ignorance of the contributions of the scholastic centuries to our heritage of philosophic thought; in other words, with the single exception of its mistaken conception of the value of the ontological argument, it is lacking in any treatment of the work of the thinkers of the mediaeval period, a period during which the principles that underlie our culture were being forged on the anvil of philosophic thought. Its second defect is a natural consequence of this ignorance, for the book shows an inadequate grasp of first principles. Conscience is not an outgrowth of consciousness, not an energization of the personality. It is an intellectual act. In modern phraseology it would be described correctly as a function, a native function of the human reason applying itself to practical matters of right and wrong.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

Anthropos *versus* Humanitas*

THOSE who hold that anthropology is not a department of genuine knowledge but a branch of propaganda (not always anti-Semitic, by any means) will find their suspicion confirmed by Radin's *Racial Myth*. The author begins by ridiculing the idea that any race could be superior, and concludes by pointing out that if we are to destroy our present civilization we must depend largely on "Marx and Lenin, Freud and Jung". This shift is typical of "'liberal" thinking on race today. The conventional intellectual, exercising almost a monopoly over our publications in New York, tells us that if we do not allow to a certain minority special privileges and monopolies we are brutal Fascists. Ludwig Lewisohn, one of the noisiest of his race today whining for our pity and our funds, in 1925 was insolently crowing over the fact that in Germany "the Jews control the most influential sections of the press; they control the theatre . . . and remain Jews. . . . The world must be Judaized." Indeed, Radin himself is bold, and tells us that "in the coming struggle for power, the leaders in the revolt will unquestionably have to be" those peoples who have "discarded" the past: "the Russians, the Americans, and the Jews". Now as to the Americans, that is a slanderous compliment. We are not all barbarians. And it is time that some eminent Jews protested against those who boast that the Jew is the enemy of civilization. The Jews have suffered enough recently in Germany from the stigma attached to their whole "race" by Eastern immigrants inadequately assimilated to Western culture; is the same thing to be repeated in America? The Russians who have discarded their past are of course those who are contentedly Communist, whose minds have been "liberated" from knowledge of European culture as V. F. Calverton would have us work for the "liberation" of American literature.

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* THE RACIAL MYTH *by Paul Radin* (WHITTLESEY HOUSE. 141 pp. $1.50)

I have quoted the words "liberal" and "liberated" because I hate to see a word with honourable associations misused. Paul Radin, for example, dedicates this book to his father, "always in the vanguard of liberal movements", and deplores the "atrocities" in Germany, but when the intolerance is on the other side it is highly admirable:

> . . . Tolerance, however desirable it may seem, is at bottom a luxury, and a seductive one at that. . . . The Bolsheviks . . . seized the power and proceeded to abolish tolerance, on the correct theory that the latter was a luxury that could well be postponed to later times. . . . They [did] plan intelligently and force these plans to completion with almost cynical ruthlessness . . . this constructive realism, this superior consciousness. . . .

But there are no inherent habits of the mind and heart of civilized man. They are all specifically determined by the former generation, and it will be as easy to have the habits and outlook that the proponents of the new order demand, then, as it is to have our present ones, today.

This frank assertion of "what we will do to you if we get a chance" is made even clearer: "We need not worry about the glories of the past. . . . The society of tomorrow intends to regulate how much of this is to be incorporated into the present. We simply cannot trust the past." This avowed determination to suppress the results of human experience in the past, this insolent hostility to all that is meant by liberal culture, scholarship, and humane learning, will supply more ammunition to the large and growing body of educated men who are contending that the social studies are a happy hunting-ground for pseudo-scientists, and that the culture which has been achieved by white men after thirty laborious centuries finds its greatest enemies today in certain practitioners of sociology, economics, psychology, anthropology, political science, and "education"—charlatans fanatically devoted to a crude materialism that has not even been up-to-date error since the 1890's. Since men trained in these studies have already gained control of our public schools, our poor relief, and our literary journals, and are bidding for absolute mastery of our universities, our economic and our political life; in short, since all these pursuits involve the study of man and the knowledge of what is of most real worth to him, they should be staffed by humanists, not by men so uneducated as to confuse statistics with taste.

As an example of the judgements of value which a pseudo-science leads to – and all action, even a decision to boycott German goods, grows out of a judgement concerning value – turn to page 67 of this book:

> Other peoples before [the Greeks], civilized and uncivilized, have had great literatures and great arts. Today we know definitely that even comparatively simple tribes, without writing and without adequate tools, can achieve true and profound literatures and arts. Our vistas have grown larger, our arrogance and narrow-mindedness smaller.

We might suggest that before a man write books in English he should at least have the humility to learn to write the language, even if he was born in Poland – that if the "tools" were not "adequate" for the achievement mentioned, the achievement was not achieved. We might even, if we were in a malicious mood, rejoice that Radin's misuse of language has tripped him unwittingly into a correct characterization of his attitude – certainly narrow-mindedness is bad enough, but a smaller narrow-mindedness is worse. We could add such gems as "complex civilizations developed exactly twice, conceivably three times" as an enlightening parallel to the phrase "exact science" as applied, let us say, to any one of the seven deadly psychologies. But let us pass beyond these matters of style to the deeper matters of content, and beg that we be introduced to a library of just one of those "profound literatures" to be matched with Homer, Sophocles, and Plato, produced by a simple tribe, without writing. Perhaps such absurdities are the result of getting one's knowledge of literature from studying the lore of Winnebagos and Ojibwas – a worthy pursuit, doubtless, but no substitute for an education. A thousand such specializations, all grounded on the same crude philosophy, all voting together, cannot outweigh one really critical mind equipped with "adequate tools" (linguistic, logical, aesthetic, and historical) in any social work – educating, administering, thinking, propagandizing. As some of our university trustees are beginning to realize, a thousand specialists do not constitute a university, and cannot offer a training equal to that of one good teacher with a real appreciation of "the glories of the past". Those glories, as Arnold pointed out, we must know in order to know ourselves and our own potentialities. Radin's study of "Primitive Man as Philosopher" does not seem to have contributed much to this end. "The past", he asserts with flippant contempt at the conclusion of his *Racial Myth*, "has always taken care of itself with meticulous and automatic regularity." Just how the past takes care of itself without any human effort he does not explain – presumably this is accomplished by some manifestation of Nature. But it will be observed that Radin thinks of himself as a destroyer of myths! As a matter of fact, we are interested not in taking care of the past, but in letting the past take care of us. And it is obvious to anyone who has studied man through his finest achievements (rather than through Winnebago myths and primitive "philosophy") that the art, the thought, the rich experience accumulated by the past has never "taken care of itself . . . with automatic regularity" but has been preserved for human use by the ardent and unwearied labour of a few active, thinking men in each community – when it has been preserved at all.

Hence the supreme importance today of studying man not merely as a part of Nature. It is the limitation of genuine science that it can go no farther; it is the presumption of the pseudo-scientist to claim that his method is valid for all problems, that what is beyond quantitative measurement is non-existent. If the English Church for generations contributed greatly to civilizing the Englishman by "putting a scholar and a gentleman in every parish" it is equally important today that the priests of the new faith, the professional students, teachers, and administrators of society, should study man as *humanity* – an organic society cherishing ethical and aesthetic values, and offering the opportunity, the tradition, and the discipline whereby man may separate himself from what is barbarous and participate more and more in a truly humane life, the life of reason and of cultivated taste. Unless we want to wipe it all out and start again at savage beginnings, hoping that in another thirty centuries we may, possibly, barring all accidents on the way, enjoy a rich culture, it is time that we were meeting the effrontery of those who, like Radin, take the offensive and demand that the ideal state of the future "must be based upon a world that has broken with its past".

And if anyone thinks that this is just a matter of speculation, let him attend a faculty meeting revising a college curriculum (deciding that Polish is as valuable as Greek, and the study of Negro anthropology in no way inferior to the study of Italian painting, as elements in a "modern" culture); or let him try to find in our literary journals a sympathetic review of a serious book dealing with the past on any but "liberal" principles (I am thinking of the reception accorded Spengler's *Hour of Decision*); or let him observe a conference of Protestant clergymen throwing overboard the body of Christian culture and embracing the paynim—embracing, let us say, "Marx and Lenin, Freud and Jung".

Radin modestly refers to himself and his fellows as "those of us who have preserved some vestige of intellectual and emotional poise".

Some vestige—perhaps.

JOSEPH E. BAKER

Thomist Aesthetic*

AESTHETICS is a peculiar branch of philosophical study; the more one pursues it, the more one realizes that, of all the branches, here is the most vague, and here the least satisfactory. As Father Gilby points out, the subject matter of aesthetics is a type of experience largely opposed to the reason, for the "poetic experience" represents a taking in of a concrete object directly, immediately – knowledge of a "thing", whole and individual, whereas the reason, by its very nature, is concerned with concepts, with forms – in a word, with abstractions. What Father Gilby says of his own book could far better be said of most other treatises on the subject: "There are gaps in the argument, but it is enough to have indicated the terms of the problem and the nature of a possible solution. And

* POETIC EXPERIENCE: An Introduction to the Thomist Aesthetic *by Thomas Gilby, O.P.* (SHEED & WARD. 113 pp. $1.00)

if it imitates the famous Duke of York, and wears the air of marching up to its subject and marching down again, why, can any writer on aesthetic hope to do more?"

Presumably the answer is "No". And yet, in 113 small pages, this author has done as much, and that is more than many a philosopher has accomplished in this department with far more fuss and feathers. *Poetic Experience* is, first of all, a model of clear and graceful writing on a subject intensely difficult at best. In its beautifully logical arrangement one finds only what is to be expected from a disciple of Saint Thomas – what is to be expected, but what is often not found. Father Gilby's thesis is simple enough; he is attempting to find a parallel in poetic experience to the experience of the mystic. He sees here a form of direct perception, direct knowledge of a thing, a reality, as opposed to the conceptual knowledge of the intellect, though he is at great pains never to disparage the latter, and, indeed, to assign to it the function of a guardian, of a wise censor and disciplinarian which prevents the exercise of immediate perception from leading to chaos and anarchy. He defines this kind of direct – as contrasted with rational – knowledge in sentences of marked richness and clarity:

> Really real knowledge is reserved for those moments when the mind seizes and possesses a substance in a moving and intimate experience. It may be religious, the sense of sharing in the movement of all things to God; or affective, as when two fall in love; or compassionate, as when tragedy is joined in sacrifice; or poetical, an echo of horns far away; or even philosophical, the sight in one flash of the distinction between essence

and existence. All are beyond meaning, interpretation, expression. A man says he "knows" such things without felt need for apology or elucidation. They are really part of him. Now is the mind most truly itself, a faculty of the real. Such knowledge is not for the instructors, the spectators, or for those who "warm both hands before the fire of life"; but for those who strive and suffer, the players, the makers, the poets, the saints.

It is impossible, in the compass of a review, to summarize Father Gilby's analysis of his thesis in terms of the psychology of Saint Thomas, or to detail in full his development of the idea of poetic experience. Enough has been said to indicate his approach to the problem, and the quotations given may serve to show the felicity of his style. Suffice it that, to the present reviewer, Father Gilby's application of Thomist principles to this specific matter seems excellent. A paragraph may be quoted from the end of the treatise showing the depth of the implications of a theory of aesthetics which links it with theology and mystical experience:

> Though knowledge for the present is never complete, and desire never wholly at rest, yet the experience is an intimation of immortality. The fact is that fundamentally the problem is theological. We are made for God. This is not just a catechism answer, but a conclusion to a strict metaphysical analysis of our nature and a conviction forced on many by a generous and intelligent experience of living. Only life and truth so sheer and simple as to be God's alone can penetrate our depths and capture us completely. Anything less, however noble it be, has a creaturely limitation in its very constitution. This limitation though not a flaw, but rather a cast, so

to speak, which our own creatureliness finds attractive, is yet enough to prevent its entering into us with perfect immediacy and satisfying us entirely. All the conditions of the aesthetic experience, and much more, will be realised in the beatific vision, and thence will descend all knowledge of creatures that are dear to us.

Altogether *Poetic Experience* can be strongly recommended to anyone interested in the problems of aesthetics, particularly in the recent literature of scholastic aesthetics to which Jacques Maritain and Eric Gill have so largely contributed. For here is attempted what neither Maritain nor Gill have tried to do: a description of the mind of man functioning in that peculiar way which produces what we all recognize as masterpieces of artistic achievement – as distinguished from the mere "making of things well", which is the very necessary workaday component of artistic expression.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

American Philosophy *

ACCORDING to Professor Townsend, who is aware that no philosophy is indigenous to a man or a nation and that the process of thinking has, and must have, its roots in the past, we have been philosophically literate only since the Civil War. Three preparatory periods preceded: the Colonial period, the Revolutionary period (1770-1820), and the post-Revolutionary period (1820-1870). In the Colonial period our philosophical heritage was mainly British in content.

* PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS IN THE UNITED STATES *by Harvey Gates Townsend* (AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY. 293 pp. $2).

In the second period our teachers were French. Then we were caught up in the German philosophical movement of the first half of the nineteenth century, the spirit of which movement "was peculiarly suited to the protestant and romantic temper of the rising American nation". Finally we emerge into the fourth period, the period of conscious, professional philosophy. It is marked by the names of Royce, Peirce, James, Dewey, and Santayana.

Since Peirce's death in 1914 it has been the fashion to speak of him as the greatest American philosopher. In our author's treatment of the complex pattern of American philosophical theory in this last period of fifty years the name of Peirce bulks large. Peirce was a fountain-head, a seminal mind. He was a convinced anti-nominalist, had imbibed much from Kant and something from Hegel, developed his own philosophy of continuity, and exercised his greatest influence in the domain of logic and metaphysics. In discussing his background the author says:

> Perhaps the most important [element] in all the training of Peirce the philosopher was his intensive study of mediaeval and scholastic philosophy, especially the works of Duns Scotus.

This is the solitary reference to scholasticism in the book. It would seem, then, that there is latent in the author's viewpoint an illicit assumption that scholasticism was a dead and buried system which, with the single exception of its effect on the erudite Peirce, could have had no appreciable influence on the genesis of American thought.

Now there is no historical basis for the popular belief that scholastic philosophy suddenly disappeared at the end of the Middle Ages and gave way to something new. The humanists of the *Quattrocento* and *Quintocento* certainly opposed scholasticism but they did not kill it. The recent investigations of the relations of Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and Leibnitz to scholasticism show very clearly how false is the common notion of an unbridgeable gap between mediaeval and modern philosophy. Luther and Melancthon opposed scholasticism but they were powerless to destroy its influence as an academic discipline. Peterson's study of the history of Aristotelianism in the German Protestant universities has brought out the interesting fact that the official text in those institutions was the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* of Suarez. The first real break with the scholastic tradition came, according to Grabmann, when Kantian philosophy appeared and the age of enlightenment dawned.

Are there, then, any vestiges of scholasticism in the academic life of our Colonial period? The question does not even seem to have occurred to the author of this book. But Dr. James J. Walsh, in an article to be found in the *New England Quarterly* for July, 1932, sets forth the result of his researches on the matter. In that article there are given various Commencement sheets, or lists of examination theses, which were in use in our colleges up to almost the end of the eighteenth century. Harvard was using the traditional thesis sheets as early as 1642 and Yale as late as 1797. While it might be too much to argue to a full scholastic content, there is no room for doubt that the examinations were conducted according to the scholastic form.

In discussing the author's disregard of scholasticism it is only fair to say that he is merely following a fashion. A notable instance of this academic fashion occurred at the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy held at Harvard in 1926. The Fifth Congress had met in 1924 at Naples, celebrating the second centenary of Kant's birth. The professors of scholasticism were admitted to that congress on an equal footing with the adherents of other great modern schools of thought. But at Harvard, at a congress of more than six hundred philosophers among whom was Etienne Gilson, the well-known French Thomist, scholasticism was side-tracked into the department of the History of Philosophy together with the defunct philosophies of Arabia and Turkey.

It is true, of course – though there are annually more than 100,000 American students of Thomas Aquinas—that scholasticism in America is by no means as vocal as it is in France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Austria, and even England. No European author, writing a history of the philosophical ideas of his country over the period of those last three centuries, could afford to ignore scholasticism. The pages of our own *Philosophical Review*, with its various articles on the state of philosophy in France or Germany and other European countries, bear eloquent witness to the truth of that statement. If Dr. Townsend writes, in this otherwise excellent little book, as if there were no such force in American academic life as the philosophy of Aquinas it does not seem that he is wholly to blame. But the fact remains that this book does not tell the whole story of the genesis of philosophical ideas in the United States.

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